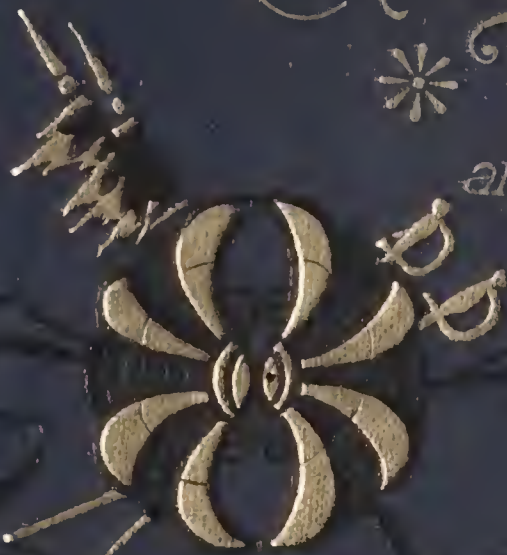


The Colonel's
Christmas
* Dinner
and Other Stories
King





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J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY, Publishers,
PHILADELPHIA.

THE COLONEL'S
CHRISTMAS DINNER
AND
OTHER STORIES

EDITED BY
CAPT. CHARLES KING



PHILADELPHIA
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

1892

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THE COLONEL'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.

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THE
COLONEL'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.

THE COLONEL'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.

INTRODUCTION.

At sunset on the 24th of December the commanding officer of Fort Blank was mentally as blue as the trousers of his pet orderly and facially black as the self-same orderly's boots—minus the shine. The north mail was just in, borne by a half-breed Sioux on a more than half-starved pony, and thereby came the news that three officials high in repute and moderately so in rank in their respective corps would arrive late on the following day and spend the night at the post. They had been far to the northward, "investigating" at the Agencies along the Wakpa Washtay, and had not even found a reason for the misnomer. Everybody who was ever there believes that the water of that fabled stream was good only when skillfully diluted. They had started for the distant railway, hoping to reach their domestic friends by Christmas Day. But bad luck befell them. A gale and blinding snow-storm swept over the northwest from Boulder to the Black Hills. Their driver lost the way—first—and the mules next. The party camped in a cañon "until the clouds rolled by"—were found and towed into an outlying cantonment by a scouting band of troopers, and now, here they were "coming to roost in my rookery," said the Colonel, "when I haven't even a crow to pick with them."

But this was not the sum total of his troubles. There was worse news—or lack of news, which meant bad news in this case—from the south. He had planned a quiet little dinner—just half-a-dozen of his cronies and favorites, and indeed there was but scanty room for more—the invitations had been issued and accepted; his worthy help-mate and their eldest daughter were already deep in preparation: when lo!—the fact he had to face on Christmas Eve was that Christmas Day was apt to bring him double-loaded tribulation. The same storm that brought him extra guests had blocked the coming of the extra dinner.

Fort Blank's market-town lay just about a hundred miles away, when the skies and roads were clear, and just about a thousand when they weren't. The oysters, the turkeys, the celery, the cranberries, the fruits ordered sent by the stage due at Blank at 4 P.M. on the 24th, were stuck in the snow-drifts an indefinite distance south. Even the telegraph couldn't find them.

When a man's in trouble, in nine cases out of ten, the quicker he tells his wife, the sooner it's over. The Colonel went home overcome with the weight of his woe. For a moment his better half was, apparently, as prostrated as himself—no woman likes to have a dinner-party ruined, either by having too little to eat or too many to eat it—but no sooner did she note his profound dejection, than she arose to the occasion.

“Never mind, Colonel, the missing dinner will turn up in time, and if it doesn't, we'll make them so welcome, after their hard trip, that anything will taste good. And then, you know, there's the champagne we were saving for Dot's wedding. It will cover a multitude of sins—like charity. Don't you worry. I'll manage it.”

And she did.

That woman was a marvel of energy, pluck, and

resources. She trotted over through the gloaming to her especial crony, the Major's kindly wife, catching the children peeping over the balusters ready to scream with ecstasy at the sight of a possible Santa Claus.

She had brief consultation with her. She hurried down the line to the bachelor dens and pounced on Mr. Briggs, who, though devoted to "Dot," was as yet understood to be on terms of probation. There wasn't anything Briggs wouldn't do for her—now, at least—and Briggs, before tattoo, was riding away through the glistening moonlight over the rolling expanse of snow "scouting for that dinner" with an all-night jaunt before him. She had roused the sympathies of the garrison. Strangers are coming—all unexpected—but must be welcomed.

It is a characteristic of frontier life that the very men and women who entertain and express at times most unflattering opinions of their neighbors, from the "C. O." down to the "Sub," will turn to, when the honor of the garrison is at stake, and help them out to the extent of their spoons, salad forks, their most treasured china—their last cent, and Fort Blank rallied to a woman to the support of the Colonel and his energetic wife.

All through the crisp, sparkling sheen of the moonlit evening, dark, muffled forms were flitting from house to house along the lines of officers' quarters. Little packages of gifts—home-made, perhaps, but loving—were left for the children everywhere, and then there was perpetual stamping of overshoes on the Colonel's porch and laughing greetings of party after party that came trooping in—everybody bringing material aid and comfort.

And so before midnight the modest little dinner originally proposed developed into a phenomenal "spread." Even by tight squeezing, which the jolly subalterns advocated, not more than ten people could be seated in the

frontier dining-room, but "hang the dining-room!" said the Major. "Set a long table down this side of the house—one end in the dining-room—t'other in the parlor. Knock out the folding doors, of course—levy on all the flags, curtains—Navajo blankets, lap robes, crazy quilts and Indian shawls and their imitations in garrison. Call in the combined resources of the bachelors' mess and private establishments—and I'll bet you will make such a dazzling table of it that even if we haven't turkey and quail enough to go round they won't notice it. Then just fall to and decide how many of us you want to appear, and we'll turn out in our best bib and tucker and the old house will fairly sparkle."

The Colonel's wife sprang up and seized the speaker's hands. "Just what I hoped for, only—we'll have to borrow so much."

"Borrow anything we've got, and I'll throw in more than a gallon of that old Amontillado of mine to boot."

"*Major!* That precious sherry? You are simply too generous!"

"Not a bit! I'll be here to help drink it and I'd love to see their faces as they sip it."

The Major's wife would have embraced him then and there, but time was precious. His enthusiasm was contagious, and this was the result. The bachelors' mess contributed *nem. con.* two dozen plump quail from their larder and enough celery to make "salad for sixty." Captain and Mrs. Winston begged that they might be represented by half-a-dozen bottles of some prized Chateau Yquem they had stored away for special occasions. The Waynes trotted out some dusty flagons of Pape Clément which the Captain had laid away when serving in New Orleans. McManus, the jovial post trader, appeared with a brace of bottles of his "warranted twenty years old S.

O. P., Currnel—and ivery limon, fig, nut, raisin or dhrop there is in the house.” Fluids were after all the hardest things to provide for: that is to say, fluids of suitable quality, and yet this was galore.

“By Jove!” said the Colonel, “This isn’t my dinner. It’s the whole post that’s doing it.” But no! said the post. “It’s the Colonel’s Christmas dinner, and we are only too glad to help.”

And lo! What transformation scene was wrought by Christmas afternoon. Briggs had found the stage thirty miles out and had replaced its battered team by the well-fed mules he had taken along. By noon its precious cargo was landed at the Colonel’s kitchen, where half-a-dozen ladies were at work. Mrs. Waring had assumed charge of the cake and pastry department. Captain Wayne’s accomplished wife was up to her lovely elbows in flour. The Adjutant’s better half was out in the snow superintending the manufacture of orange ice and chocolate cream (a whole box of McManus’s Floridas was squeezed into those freezers and “divil a cint would he iver take”). The Q. M. Department had knocked up a temporary kitchen in the back-yard, where a big range was already firing up, and haunches of “black tail” and a saddle of venison were hanging in the frosty air ready for their turn. Over at Mrs. Morton’s the soup had been simmering ever since tattoo the night before—two troopers from the “Grays” on watch over it lest the fire get too hot or too low.

Nobody could beat the Quartermaster’s wife in the preparation of coffee—that was to be her province when the time came. And as for delicious jelly, there was bonny Mrs. Prime, the Doctor’s wife, with him away till the stage got in, and then it was too late for him to prohibit the expenditure of certain hospital stores which he

afterwards very gladly replaced from personal funds. And so all was bustle without, and willing hands had been as busy within the improvised banquet hall. Extra tables, chairs, china, glasses of all shapes, styles and colors, decanters, carafes, sconces, candelabra, damask, cutlery, silver, etc., had been poured in as fast as needed. Nobody had to be asked for anything, everybody sent hi—no! her best. At 3 P. M., under a canopy consisting of the great garrison flag, draped from the front of the parlor to the rear of the dining-room, with all manner of smaller flags, guidons, signal outfits, and improvised drapery too intricate for description, the Colonel's Christmas table was laid for twenty-four, and was a sight that set his eyes glistening to match the array of crystal. No flowers, of course, for 'twas in the heart of the Rockies and the dead of winter. No wax tapers, for there wasn't time to provide them, but in their stead, from scores of brilliant (tin) sconces, from candlesticks, candelabra, clusters by the dozen, there popped out the prim white "best adamantine" of the Commissary Department. "Bless your heart! Mrs. Grace," said the A. A. C. S.: "They'll make just as soft a light as wax, if there isn't a draft, and just as brilliant if you burn enough at a time."

At four thirty the lookouts reported the ambulance toiling over the divide five miles away. "Here they come!" was the cry. "Now everybody who is to be at the dinner scatter and dress. I close the banquet hall against all comers until it's time to light up," ordered the Colonel's wife, "and mind—be here sharp at six. They'll be ravenous by the time they reach the post."

"Stop! stop! my dear—one minute!" shouted the Colonel from across the hall. "Just listen to this." And with twinkling eyes the veteran read aloud a little note he held in a hand that trembled despite himself.

"DEAR COLONEL GRACE :

"All day I have been lamenting that there was nothing I could do to show my interest in the dinner you are giving to our unexpected guests. The stage came in the nick of time. It brought me from New York my special favorites of the club days a few years ago. With my best wishes for the Merriest of Christmases to all I send this box of Regalia Perfectos.

Yours most ——"

But he couldn't finish.

"Pills junior—God bless him!" shouted the Major, "and I've been doing nothing but guy him since he joined ——"

"*Colonel!*" screamed Mrs. Grace. "And we hadn't room for him."

"Make it, by Jove! Raise the roof! Why, there wasn't a cigar worth smoking on the post—and, damn these medical chaps anyway, they—they——"

"They do the nicest things in the nicest way," prompted Mrs. Grace. "Doctor Watts comes if I have to stand."

"Nonsense! Two more seats can go in there just as well as not," declared Miss Dot. "I would *like* to squeeze the doctor if you will put him next me."

"Dora! you are excited," remarked mamma. "We'll have the doctor here—next Mrs. Willis. You are to devote yourself to Major Loomis. But that'll make twenty-three. We must match him. Now, which—who?"

"I'll run right over and tell her—Kitty, of course," and Miss Dora makes a dash. In vain Mrs. Grace would have interposed. The Colonel settles it.

Kitty Wallace, by all means, or *he* wouldn't care to come. Now, I've just time to go over and hug Pills myself."

* * * * *

Fancy the astonishment of those three hungry and weary travelers, Colonels C—— and D—— and Major

L——, when, as they were assisted, stiff and half-frozen, from the ambulance and marshaled aloft to warm and cosy rooms, they were told that dinner would be ready as soon as they were, and a few friends to meet them. “Wear what you like,” said the Colonel. “We know you have only traveling garb.”

But as they thawed out under the influence of the genial glow, the abundant hot water, the sounds and, it must be added, the scents from below, for a big dinner announces itself all over the army quarters of those days before ever the grace is said, the three gentlemen realized something, at least, of what was in store for them.

“Fatigue uniform is the best we can do,” said Major Loomis. “I can see shoulder knots and aiguillettes gathering below.”

“Fatigue it is,” was the prompt response, and then there came a sudden flock of dancing lights along the roadway in front, the tramp of martial footsteps. “The band, by Jove!” said the Major, and the band it was, for an instant after there burst upon the frosty air the ringing, joyous notes of a welcoming quickstep, only one tune, for the valves of the clarionettes would freeze stiff in less than no time. But to that spirited music, marshaled by their host, they descended upon a hall full of “fair women and brave men” in all the gala of social dress.

“Dinner is served,” announced the one colored factotum at the post, throwing open the door at the head of the hall. Mrs. Grace stole her gloved hand within the arm of Colonel C——, and before that distinguished soldier had had time to bow to three people he was being led down a banqueting board, the like of which he had never seen or dreamed of seeing on the frontier in all his years of gallant service. Speedily the guests were marshaled to their places—every one seemed to know just

where to go. There was an instant of reverent silence as the voice of the old chaplain quavered its thanks and its plea for blessing on one and all. Then a rustle and subdued clatter, hushed voices for a while as the party exchanged nods and smiles and stole covert glances at the three storm-worn travelers as though seeking to read in their bearded faces what they thought of the unusual display. Colonel C——'s twinkling eyes were taking in the pretty scene with frank and genial delight. Anybody could tell from *her* smiles and heightened color that he was saying to Mrs. Grace just the loveliest possible things of the beautiful effect of the table—and well he might. Under the bright-hued drapery the glare of the candles was skillfully toned by countless tiny screens of pink tissue paper on wire frames. (Didn't three of those blessed women spend hours in cutting, pasting and trimming them?) The "adamantines" on the table were all similarly dressed with little pink bells, so that nowhere was there flame in sight. Yet the light was amply strong to bring out all the beauties of the board—the lovely costumes of the women, their own charming faces, the rich variety in the appointments of the table, in crystal, in china, in cut-glass. "Who on earth," said old Colonel D——, before he had been seated a moment, "would have dared dream of such a sight as this? Blue Points on the half-shell in the heart of the Rockies!"

They were not Blue Points—neither were they shells. They were bound to utilize those oysters (canned "selects") somehow, and this was an inspiration of the Adjutant. At each place as the banqueters took their seats stood a little block of clearest ice, six inches square and two deep, hollowed out on the upper surface, and therein reposed five of the smallest oysters that could be selected from the "selects." It was fun to see that energetic of-

ficial spending hours that afternoon with the piccolo player and the bass drummer, sawing out those "shells" from the huge blocks duly dumped in the back-yard and then laboriously hollowing out the top of each by the ingenious application of hot shot—a couple of stray twelve-pounder howitzer shells that, long since emptied and unfused, had been kicking about the post since the memory of the oldest log in the block-house at the angle.

And while these metamorphosed "selects" were being tipped with lemon juice and horse radish and slipped down past welcoming palates, white-gloved, solemn-faced "strikers"—the Major's eagle eye upon them—were filling the tiny sherry glasses (and half-filling those of larger calibre) with his treasured Amontillado. A well-drilled corps they proved—these extemporized Jeameses—for while everything was being brought in from the door at Mrs. Grace's end of the double room—everything went out at the other.

"By Jove—what sherry!" exclaimed old D—. He was too far away from the Colonel to be heard by him, but Mrs. Grace smiled her pleasure at his satisfaction and her eyes signaled "fill up again." Out went the ice blocks. In came two huge tureens of fragrant mock turtle and these were deposited on little stands on each side of the table, where the plates were quickly filled and set before the guests. "Capital idea that! Mrs. Grace," said D— again. "By Jove, madam, you must permit me to compliment you on such management. It would be sure to cool if carried in plates from the kitchen, and if there's anything hateful it's cold soup. Especially when one has been exposed to storm and tempest and zero weather for a week in the mountains as we have. More sherry? Indeed, yes. I'll lose no time in drinking your health."

And Mrs. Grace smilingly raised her glass and bowed her acknowledgments and just glanced at the humorous twinkle in the blue eyes of Colonel C——, who sat at the right hand, and who promptly sipped a ripple from the surface of his sherry as token of his sympathy in the toast.

And now the chat grew merry and general. Down the table far to the right, handsome young Doctor Watts was beaming into the blushing face of Kitty Wallace. Midway on the other side, sprightly "Dot" was "doing her level best" to fascinate dark-visaged Major Loomis, as bidden—while Briggs, whose heroic efforts had been rewarded by a seat at her other side, was scowling at the situation and reaching for more sherry. It was McManus's "best" that lay at his elbow, for the Colonel meant to use his Major's Amontillado on Sam Ward's principle—a thimble-full, and all who struck for more (except among the guests from abroad) should take the local product. A lovely woman, a visitor at the fort, was making play with her beautiful blue eyes at bluff Colonel D——, who took her in; but he was too full of his recent hardships to care for comforts less material than those to be found in his immediate front. Midway down the table the staunch ally of Mrs. Grace—the Major's wife—finding Briggs moody, decided on striving to console him, but at this moment the blue-eyed dame, finding old D—— intractable and being unaccustomed to anything less than rapt attention, took advantage of an instant's turn of Major Loomis's head, and he was caught. "Dot," rejoicing in her release from duty, turned to whisper to Briggs. Smiles, social sunshine, joyousness reigned along the board, and the Major's wife, happy in such consummation of their hopes, sent a significant look along over the wine glasses and through the pink tissue candle-bells to her

loyal friend and social chief at the head of the table, and Mrs. Grace caught it behind her fan and smiled back as the great haunch of venison came in.

At her right, beyond the senior officer of all—the low-voiced gentleman in the quiet fatigue dress—sat pretty Mrs. Wayne exchanging congratulations with the aiguilleted Adjutant who was just beyond. Then there was Mrs. Winston, wife of the soldierly, scholarly senior Captain, who sat far down at the Colonel's end chatting with Mrs. Quartermaster Drake over the trials and triumphs of the day. Then there was the Captain whose life was said to have been a romance, and the woman who had not had too much of anything but reality, and who could serenely and sweetly enjoy so bright a scene as this, even though her thoughts were much with the little ones at her modest fireside who had begged for some of the goodies when she came home (I wish you could have seen the load that the Colonel helped her to carry to those sleeping cherubs, when we broke up—never mind at what hour). And the Colonel had taken in the bride—the wife of the Post Surgeon who wouldn't have been able to get here at all, but for Briggs and his mules. And the gray-haired chaplain and his wife were there and the quartermaster, of course, and you may be sure old McManus, the jovial trader, was bidden, but he wouldn't come. "Lord! Currnel, I'd be like a fish out o' wather, and then, d'ye mind, it's the boys are all coming to the shtore to-night for the bit of spread I'm givin' them." And so what did the Graces and their counsellors do, but send and insist his pretty daughter should come, the apple of the old man's "oi," and nothing could have rejoiced him more.

By the time the turkeys were gone—wild and domestic—people were well filled, and still there came another

course, the quails of the bachelor mess, with such marvelous celery salad! And old D—— had waxed eloquent over the sauterne and exploded with amaze at sight of Pape Clément in Wyoming, and wouldn't be admonished by the disapproving glance bent upon him by his senior across the table, and burst out with "But, madam, this is magic. This beats Aladdin; beats—beats anything I ever heard of—*beats the Jews!* You couldn't have known we were coming more'n a day and you couldn't have done better if you'd known it a year. Now I never heard of Pape Clément outside of New Orleans before. Why! I couldn't have been more surprised if you had given us Pompano——"

Pop! went a champagne cork, just under his rubicund nose. He buried his grizzled moustache in the hissing fluid—Dot's wedding wine—and glanced about him a picture of bliss, defiant of adverse comment or criticism.

And now, fun, laughter, witty sallies, jovial anecdotes were criss-crossing over the board. The huge plum pudding, all wealth and blue blazes, was borne aloft by the sable functionary down the long length of the room, and there, by aid of comrade hands, placed in front of the Colonel, whose face was as roseate and blissful as D——'s, and round as the pudding's. Pop! pop! the champagne corks went flying. Dot's wedding wine was to be taxed, only enough to season the birds. Then again 'twas McManus *ad libitum*. And everybody praised the pudding, though few could eat it, and the health of the fair manufacturer was drunk, and the Adjutant's wife came in for a general toast on her ices and cream, and McManus's fruits were heaped before unheeding eyes, and at last came Mrs. Drake's masterpiece—coffee so black and rich that it left a stain on the dainty china in which it was served, and then the Colonel arose, and people at his end of the table

stopped talking, and little by little the silence spread. "Fill your glasses," he said. "Soldiers, soldiers' wives—and—soldiers' wives that ought to be."

"Bravo!" from D——.

"Oh! I forget you, Dot," said the Colonel, amidst shouts of laughter and applause, but glasses were filled, and then as the old fellow raised his on high a sudden hush fell upon them all.

"We don't often have such a chance as this, my friends. I've no words to say what joy it gives my heart to welcome you all here at this God-given and blessed season of cheer and gladness. I've no words appropriate to the Christmas-tide, dearly though I love it, but I bid you join with me in drinking—one and all—the toast that at all times, at all seasons, wherever under God's providence we may be called to serve, must ever be first and foremost in the American heart: 'The President—and the Flag!'"

Bang! went a gong somewhere out in the hallway, and as all sprang to their feet there broke upon the still night air without, in full swing, the crash of the band, joined almost instantly by a score of manly voices, "ould McManus" leading the stirring strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner." It was the climax of the evening. They had been rehearsing an hour "down at the store."

"And now," said the Colonel half an hour later, by which time the enthusiasm had subsided to some degree, "Our Guests" and "The Ladies" had been appropriately toasted and responded for (the former doubly so, as after Colonel C—— had spoken his few modest, well-chosen words D—— sprang to his feet and waxed exuberant).

"And now," said Grace, "we have talked over our little programme, the ladies and I. There's nothing for them to do, if banished. They are all indulgent as to the mat-

ter of good tobacco smoke. They have made this little dinner—every bit of it—the success our indulgent friends have pronounced it, and it would break my heart if they were to leave.” (“Break all our hearts!” shouts from everywhere). “I read not long ago of a Christmas at Sea, where the ward-room officers entertained the Admiral and their Captain and, over the walnuts and wine, told their stories each in turn.

“In almost every respect they had manifest advantages over us fellows. But in one, which outrivals theirs combined, we have the best of ’em. They had no ladies and, thank God! we have, and the best and dearest and truest in the whole Army, if I do say it. (Deafening applause).

“They have willed—and who dare disobey?—that each man here, when summoned, shall so contribute his share to the enjoyment of our Christmas night. I have done my share of the talk” (“No!—No!”), “and my duties are now at an end. It is the high privilege of the host to encourage his guests by leading off with the first story, but it is the still more blessed right of the regimental commander to transfer his burden to the shoulders of his staff. In the exercise of that right, I call upon my Adjutant for the first story. Mr. X., take the floor.”

Amidst long-continued applause the gallant old soldier took his seat, and then, one by one, regretfully, the guests turned to the other end of the table, where sat Mr. X. blushing over his aiguillettes.

THE ADJUTANT'S STORY.

“Well,” said the Adjutant, “if somebody must start the ball, I will try, though yarn-spinning isn’t my forte,

and I shall break down utterly if I see signs of satirical comment anywhere."

"Oh, shut your eyes and tell it as 'Pills' does when he sings for us," suggested the Senior Lieutenant, always ready to have a fling at the Adjutant.

"Yes, and when I open them again find the room deserted, as he did the night you got him to sing at Mrs. Freeman's." At this there was a general shout of laughter, for the incident was still fresh in the memory of the garrison.

"No," continued the Adjutant, "I'll try and tell the story. It all happened the winter my old troop was stationed at Fort Emory, and if you don't believe in ghosts you can ridicule it as much as you like."

"A ghost story!" exclaimed the lady with the blue eyes. "Oh, that's delightful! But we ought to have the room darkened." There was no response to this suggestion, however, and the Adjutant went on.

"It was a mighty hard winter. It had been blowing and snowing much of December, and by the time the holidays came on, the whole country seemed buried under the drifts. We were penned up in the post, for, unless there was imminent need, nobody wanted to send out teams in such weather. The mail was carried over to the railway twice a week by Indians who made the trip in two or three days by using up several ponies. Otherwise we had had no communication with the settlements since the twelfth of the month. Now that winter Jim Forbes and I were living together. He was serving with 'F' troop, and I with 'K.' We had the set of quarters at the lower end of the row, nearest the stables and farthest from the commanding officer's. Colonel Hawes, of the —th Foot, was in command. His family was with him—his wife, three children and a distant connection of his

wife's, Miss Frazier, a fragile, delicate girl of about twenty, who had no home of her own, it seems, and who, by being governess, and heaven knows what all besides to those three youngsters, managed to eke out a living and have a home under the Colonel's roof

"She was a shy, retiring sort of a girl, with big brown eyes ; something awfully pathetic about them, I thought at times ; but I never saw anything of her when we called at the Colonel's, and on pleasant days when she was out walking with the children she avoided notice in every way, and seemed positively scared if any of us bowed or spoke to her. She came out with Mrs. Hawes and the children late in the fall, and the winter set in soon and put a stop to her out-door pleasures, if she had any, and then Forbes took to calling frequently at the Colonel's by night, and to taking notice to those graceless kids by day. As he had hardly been on cordial terms with the family before, it was evident there was some new attraction.

"I was very fond of Jim. He was a big, burly fellow, rough as a miner and soft-hearted as a woman——"

"As a major, I thought you were going to say," put in Mr. Briggs.

"Do be quiet, Mr. Briggs," pouted the Major's wife. The Colonel frowned, and glancing around the table, Briggs found that people were getting interested and that perhaps he had better subside. The Adjutant took advantage of the diversion to imbibe a little Dutch courage from his champagne glass, and then went on :

"I say I was fond of Forbes. He was not a brilliant fellow, like Briggs here, but he was stanch and true ; a good son and brother, as I had reason to know while his mother was alive ; but he was practically alone in the world now, and rather solemn at times. He had one pronounced fad. Without being a spiritualist, he somehow

believed in spirits. He used to sit in a big, easy rocking-chair on his side of our centre-table nights when we were alone and tell me about his mother and how often he saw her and talked with her now. I told him it was all dreaming ; but he believed in it, and used to wax really eloquent, talking about his theories by the hour. We had an open fireplace, and burned hickory logs then, and though it was only a bachelor ranch, we were pretty snug and comfortable. Night after night, as the winter came on and the wind howled about the old shell of a shanty, we sat there in front of the roaring blaze, he with his pipe, and always rocking to and fro, to and fro as he talked, and I got to know him better and like him better every day.

“ ‘ Why,’ said he one night, ‘ you laugh at my thinking I can hear mother moving around my bed, or sometimes bending over to kiss me as she used to when I was a boy. Now we’ve been pretty close friends here for a couple of years, old man ; don’t you suppose that if I were to die I’d want to come back and see how you were getting along without me ? Why, it would be just as natural for me to come drifting in some night and setting this old chair of mine to rocking, and communing with you just as I do now. I don’t suppose I’d be visible to you ; but it seems as though I could make my presence known. I’ll tell you what : If I’m killed or suddenly taken away any time while you are here, and my theory is all right, that our souls can rustle around on earth awhile, I’ll let you know I’m gone in that way. I’ll just float in here and start my old rocker going.’ ”

“ Of course I simply laughed at him ; but there came a night when I didn’t.

“ I didn’t care to go often to the Colonel’s ; he was very prosy, and would talk for hours on regulations and

papers, but Forbes got to going up there two and three and then four nights a week. Mrs. Hawes was quick enough to divine the attraction, and as she hoped with another year to live in a city and educate her brood at some fashionable school, she doubtless thought it a good plan to marry off Miss Frazier, and Forbes would make a capital husband. He was just the man a woman could rule with a look. And so Miss Frazier was brought down from the upper regions and made to sing and play for him, which she did not at all want to do as it turned out : and, as she was being obviously thrown at his head, the result was inevitable : she began to hate the sight of him ; and big honest Jim used to come home looking bluer and bluer, and sighing like a dozen furnaces, and yet saying no word. I got nervous about it, and was for getting somebody to go and steer Mrs. Hawes onto the other tack, when old Boreas himself took a hand and helped us in a most unexpected way.

“ Jim had been in the depths of despond for a whole week. It had been snowing night and day, when on the evening of the 19th, I think it was, he came back from the Colonel's earlier than ever.

“ ‘ Where can I get a sleigh ? ’ he asked.

“ ‘ I don't know, Jim, unless the trader has one. Why ? ’ And then he told me. Miss Frazier had a brother, an only brother, it seems, who was far from strong, and who had grievously offended his aunt, Mrs. Hawes, a year or two before. Miss Frazier's heart was bound up in the young fellow, and she had received a letter saying that at last he had obtained a good appointment in southern California where the physicians had urged his going ; that he must be in San Francisco on the first of January ; but that he was coming around by the way of the old K. P., and they would spend Christmas eve together. He could not

go on to the fort, for he would not set foot under the Hawes's roof. She must come in to Grover City, the nearest railway town where there was a good hotel. With the cheerful ignorance of all men who have never been West, he thought it a perfectly feasible thing to drive over the intervening forty miles at any time ; and now there was not a trail that wasn't deep in snow. The Colonel and his wife had coldly told her the trip was simply impossible and bade her telegraph to him to hire a sleigh and strong team and come out to the fort. In such weather and for such a trip it would cost a fabulous sum, and her brother had not a surplus cent. She was sobbing aloft in her little room while Mrs. Hawes was dilating to Forbes upon the utter absurdity of the whole thing. 'It's nothing but an absurd sentiment on her part. Of course if there were any way of bringing them together I would do it. But there isn't. The Colonel says no horses or mules could possibly make the trip. She's just crying herself sick over it.'

"Then what does Forbes do but scribble a note and send it to her by one of her pupils, saying in so many words that he would either get her to town or fetch her brother out to the fort, but at taps he was back in the house again with a face as long as my story. There wasn't a thing on runners in the post. The nearest sleigh that he could hear of was at Rayburn's ranch, ten miles over on the Saline. At dawn he rode away, permission being rather grudgingly granted, we thought ; took an Arrapahoe guide with him and two horses, and then we heard nothing more until late in the evening, when he drove in with a really good sleigh, but a played out team. He had gone over thirty miles through unbroken drifts to get it.

"Next morning, with two fresh horses, hired of old Grubb, our post trader, he loaded up the sleigh with

robes and rations, and was away at daybreak bound for Grover City ; and though I didn't feel like talking with Mrs. Hawes, I did want to see Miss Frazier, and tell her how blithely Jim had started. He expected to drive slowly all day long, with frequent rests and plenty of feed for the team, and to reach Murray's ranch at night, twenty miles away. After that he would find at least partially broken roads and could get along faster. It was a glorious, sunshiny winter's day. The snow sparkled and glistened. The sun was so warm that the eaves began to drip, and the women and children came flocking out on the porches, snow-balling from house to house. The Colonel had ordered out a party to follow the telegraph line and locate the breaks, and I was really sorry the detail had fallen to another fellow and not to me, as I walked up to the Colonel's and asked for Miss Frazier. She looked even more fragile than ever when she came into the parlor from the school-room. Her big eyes were full of anxiety and longing, and heavy tear-drops began to gather the moment I told her of Jim's buoyant start at dawn. She knew of his going—her window commanded a view of what had been the road for several miles—and yet, instead of being glad and hopeful, as I supposed, she was profoundly depressed. 'I cannot help it,' she said, throwing herself into a chair. 'I have been haunted by most dreadful dreams ; tormented by all manner of forebodings. Oh, I wish he had not gone !'

“ Now this was not at all what I had expected or hoped for, but I tried to cheer her ; told her Jim would find rapidly clearing roads, and would have her brother at our house before sundown on the 24th, possibly by noon. 'And Mr. Frazier's room is all ready for him,' I added ; 'and we'll have a jolly Christmas dinner there. Mrs. Stannard is coming to see you this morning. She will

matronize the party, for it was arranged weeks ago that she and Captain Stannard were to be our Christmas guests. Then the next day we will see Mr. Frazier safely over to the railway and off for 'Frisco.' And still she was sad and unresponsive. I could not rouse her at all. I went and got Mrs. Stannard to run over and see her. And that night I went again. Mrs. Stannard said she feared Miss Frazier would be ill, she was in such distress of mind. 'She cannot sleep without being tortured by dreams in which she sees Mr. Forbes and her brother lost on the prairie and freezing to death in some terrible storm. She cannot close her eyes without the picture rising before her at the instant.' Now this was the evening of the 21st. The detachment came in and said they had followed the telegraph line for seven miles; that many poles were down and the wires were buried out of sight in a thousand places. They also said that Forbes with his sleigh had followed the line instead of the road. It was straighter, but went up hill and down dale in a way no wagon could follow, and it might be difficult for him.

"On the 22d about nightfall an Indian runner came in with our letter mail. He said Forbes had got to Murray's all right, despite several upsets. So far, so good. There was a letter for Miss Frazier, and I was not surprised to get a message before tattoo. Mrs. Stannard wanted me to come to her a moment.

"Just as I supposed. Miss Frazier was there with her brother's letter, and the poor girl was well-nigh heart-broken. He had been seized with a hemorrhage at St. Louis, and forbidden to start at the time proposed. He could now reach Grover City only by noon of the 23d, and it might be the last time, he said, that he could ever hope to see her loved face. It was now arranged that for a little change and rest she should remain with Mrs.

Stannard a day or two. The dreams that so terrified her might not pursue her there.

“But they did. When I went over to inquire the next day, the poor girl was nearly wild. ‘Is there no way, no way to stop them?’ she cried. ‘They must not attempt to come. It is death to both.’ But we reasoned with her; pointed out how the skies were cloudless; the weather settled; assured her that by this time Frazier and Forbes were probably getting ready to start and would spend the night at Murray’s Ranch. She only hid her face and moaned. ‘I have brought this upon them,’ she cried. ‘I have driven them to their death.’ And I went off feeling almighty queer, I can tell you.

“Yet the sun went down in cloudless splendor. There wasn’t a breath of air stirring. I thought I would run over to Stannard’s to get them out to see the sunset, thinking it would cheer them. But the western sky began to turn yellow, not red, and I went back. At tattoo I tramped over to the hospital to read the barometer, hoping to come back and assure her that it said, ‘Set Fair.’ But I went to the trader’s instead and offered Jake Cooley, one of our half-breed scouts, twenty-five dollars to make the night ride to Murray’s. He looked surprised, said all right, jumped off the bar where he was sitting and started down to the corral for his broncho; but came back in ten minutes and said he wouldn’t try it for fifty. The wind was beginning to moan about the haystacks; and the guard were ordered to get their buffalo coats and overshoes.

“Before dawn the windows were rattling. Still there was nothing really alarming in the weather. But when the morning light came creeping in, the air was full of snow-flakes again and the skies were heavily overcast. I won’t go into details. Those of us who were with the regiment that winter will never forget the blizzard that

followed. By noon a gale of seventy-five miles an hour was raging from the north, a blinding storm of snow from the sky and drifts from the surface was whirling into the faces of the few who dared venture forth, and the mercury had fallen to twenty below zero. It was simply awful. And not a word of news had we from Forbes or Frazier, even when nightfall came.

“And now comes the strange part of my story : I had been over at Stannard’s trying hard to think of something to cheer or comfort that poor girl ; but it was useless. She was either staggering up and down the room, wringing her hands, or else moaning on the sofa. Mrs. Stannard could do nothing to drive away her awful dread. I tried to assure her that Forbes was so skilled a plainsman that he would never think of quitting shelter on so threatening a morning. But she shook her head. ‘I know him—I know him. He will only think of the promise he made me,’ was her reply. At tattoo I left them and the wind blew me down the line and past my own gate and would have whirled me to the stables if I hadn’t grabbed the fence. All sentries had been drawn inside. There was no attempt to form companies for roll-call. Everybody was indoors. A blazing fire was roaring in our chimney place as I entered : but I confess I was utterly depressed, the girl’s foreboding had so affected me. It was useless to attempt rescue of any kind. All was dark as Erebus on the howling prairie, and neither man nor beast could make his way northward against that storm. I threw myself in my old padded arm-chair and drew it close to the hearth ; but the blast roared in the chimney and fairly shook the house from roof to cellar, rattling the blinds and sashes and driving the snow through every crevice. Even our old cat and her frolicsome kittens seemed uneasy and worried, and Tabby,

who never so honored me when Jim was home, sprang into my lap for petting and comfort that I was too heavy-hearted to give; and so with querulous 'miaow' she went back to her brood in the basket. And there I sat, pretty well worn out, I can tell you, with distress and anxiety, thinking despite myself of all Forbes had ever said of coming back from the spirit world and rocking here in his old chair. There it stood, looking so lonesome, empty, silent, that I half turned as though to stretch out my hand and give it a sympathetic pat, but I could not reach it; it was full five feet away. And just then,—how he managed to blow in that storm, I don't know,—but some one of the infantry buglers up at the north end of the parade got out on the covered veranda and began to sound taps. Never in my life had I heard it like that: so wild, so weird, and so despairing. Many a time it had wailed 'put out your light' over the grave of some poor fellow whom we had buried in Arizona or under the shadows of the mountains; but never did it sound to me as it did that awful night, and for the life of me I could not help thinking of her dream and of Jim's strange promise to me. I felt a cold chill running all over me, and I huddled closer to the fire as the last note died away, completely ready now to believe with her that it was their requiem. And then,—then if I had needed something to banish the last lingering doubt, it came. Believe me or not as you choose, but as true as I sit here and tell this story,—as true as I live and breathe,—just as the last note of taps died away, without a sound, without a touch from any source that I could see, without the faintest reason—Forbes' big rocking-chair settled suddenly back as though he had lowered himself into it, and then rocked violently to and fro.

“No, I didn't faint or cry out or run. I just fell back in

my own chair with every hair standing on end, chilled to the marrow. I lay back there glaring at that awful chair as it slowly ceased its rocking; and at last I got up, reached the dining-room somehow, swallowed a glass of whiskey and was striving to get back some vestige of nerve when the front door burst open and a big burly man plunged in. 'Help me get him out of the saddle! We're both frozen,' he cried,—and it was my blessed old Jim still in the flesh. I yelled for our striker, and in a moment more the three of us, between us, had lugged in a fur-covered stranger, too exhausted to speak. The horses fled to the stables down under the hill. The striker ran for Stannard and the doctor, and in five minutes Helen Frazier, wild-eyed, tearful, but rejoicing beyond all words, was kneeling by her brother's side.

" 'I'll be all right soon,' he whispered at last. 'I'm not frozen. Look to the lieutenant! He made me wear his fur gloves and buffalo shoes.' And then we found Jim had vanished to the kitchen, and there he was ankle deep in a tub of snow, while Bell, the striker, was plunging his master's blue-white fingers into a bucket similarly filled.

"And yet, with of course this exception," proceeded the Adjutant after a pause, "our Christmas dinner the next day was the most delightful I ever knew. As though to make amends for its fury of the day before, the weather was simply perfect. Most of us went to morning service in our little chapel, and almost everybody came in to see Jim and pat him on the back, for his hands and feet were all done up in bandages; and over again Mr. Frazier smilingly had to tell of that fearful trip from Murray's ranch. The wind being at their backs they had thought to get along all right, but soon after starting the snow got so thick, the gale so violent and the drifts so deep that

they were capsized again and again, and at last the pole snapped short off. They abandoned the sleigh, and Forbes had hauled his fur gloves and overshoes on his companion's resisting hands and feet, for Frazier was utterly unprepared for such an outing. Then Jim lifted the young fellow on the off horse, mounted the near one himself, and so they were simply blown along for fifteen miles. Again and again the horses fell in the drifts and Forbes would pick Frazier up, set him back and then on they would plunge, blinded, breathless, almost exhausted and frozen stiff, when at last the poor brutes landed them within the shelter of the garrison.

“ Well, that evening we had our Christmas dinner, Mrs. Stannard presiding at one end of the table, Stannard and I doing the carving for the crowd ; for we had in the chaplain and his wife and two daughters and two of the bachelor officers, Mr. and Miss Frazier and Jim. Just a dozen, though Forbes could not sit at the table. He was bolstered up in that imp of a rocking-chair, with his bandaged feet on another, yet jolly and happy as he could be, for Miss Frazier cut up his turkey for him, and the way she blushed made her look pretty as a picture. And—that about ends it. I got a seven days' leave, and Frazier and I made the trip to Grover City all right ; and when I came back at the end of the week and went over to the Colonel's with a package Frazier gave me for his sister, little Kitty Hawes showed me right into the parlor, and there were Jim and Miss Frazier sitting side by side on the sofa, and would you believe it? instead of being glad to see me when she jumped up, she ran right out of the room, and was still red as a rose when Jim at last coaxed her back. She is Mrs. Captain Forbes, of the quartermaster's department now, and a mighty sweet woman too. And her brother gained health and money

both, at San Diego, and—d,— well, as I said, that's about all there was to it."

"But, Mr. X.," exclaimed two or three feminine voices at once, "you haven't accounted for that chair's behaving so. I never heard anything so weird and mysterious in all my life."

"Now do you know," said the Adjutant, "that thing puzzled me for a whole week after I got back. I wouldn't tell Jim about it. It impressed me so strangely. And now that he was spending all his evenings at the Colonel's I wouldn't sit alone with the confounded chair. It gave me cold shivers to look at it, and I used to clear out and go calling, or down to the store, and one night I had to be in for a minute, and all of a sudden, just as it did the night of the gale, just as taps were sounding, too, that infernal—I beg your pardon—that blessed chair suddenly began to rock again. Why, you ought to have seen me start for the door. I grabbed my cap, flew around the table, and then there was a fearful, blood-curdling yell."

"Oh, Mr. X.," shuddered the Colonel's daughter.

"Yes, a fearful, blood-curdling yell, I give you my word. You see I stepped square on to the liveliest of the kittens, just after the little brute had pitched off the hind end of that rocker. Its weight was enough to tilt back the chair and set it going."

For a moment there was a dead silence. People looked at one another, and then the sentiment of the entire table, doubtless, was voiced by the lady with the sweet blue eyes.

"Mr. X., I declare I think you're a fraud."

The Adjutant having scored a dead failure, it seemed difficult for the moment to find a successor. Briggs was called for, but begged off on the plea that if *that* was a specimen of the light-weights' work, it was time to call on the seniors.

“Not a bit of it,” boomed the Major in his ponderous basso. “We want to give you boys your day now—early in the battle, when people are not sleepy and eager to go home, as they may be after hearing you talk.”

“I appeal from the Major to the chair,” laughed Briggs, bowing diplomatically to the father of the feast.

“And the chair sustains the Major. Go on, Briggs. Do what you can for the sake of the subs,” replied the Colonel.

“It’s too much like voting on a court,” said the Lieutenant. “I’m glad the ladies are here to do away with the idea that it is a court,” and he glanced at the bright face smiling by his side. It gave him courage, at least. “And if I’m to be the next victim, the sooner it’s over the better. Here goes——

THE SENIOR LIEUTENANT'S STORY.

“When Jack Talbot was thirty years old and had, after eight years’ service, attained the exalted rank of senior second lieutenant of his regiment, he suddenly conceived the idea of taking unto himself a wife. It is hard to say exactly what put this thought into his head, for if there ever was an army bachelor unsuited for matrimony, it was Jack.

“To begin with he was as poor as the proverbial church-mouse, head over heels in debt (the interest he paid would have supported a poor family), very extravagant, and with about as much idea of economy or business as a babe—and then again he had become so wedded to his bachelor ways of life, that any radical change seemed fraught with a great deal of danger. Jack himself never appreciated these things—in fact he had an idea that he was

just the man to make a most proper and excellent head of a family. 'Of course I'll have to make a great many personal sacrifices,' he mused to himself as the idea began to grow on him; 'no more card practice—no more staying out late at nights—no more fast horses—no more—in fact, no more foolishness,' and Jack pulled himself together with a sudden virtuous determination that was delightful to behold; on the other hand, however, he continued, 'Instead of the aimless, shiftless existence I've been leading for some years, there'll be something to live for—some one to work for—some one to brighten and cheer my quarters, and best of all, some one to sympathize with me when I've had a row with "Old Graball," who, by the way, was the regimental quartermaster, and the only man in the regiment that John detested, and with whom he was continually skirmishing. Now when a man decides to marry, there is generally some one in his mind's eye; but with Jack this was not at all the case. In fact, this important feature seemed to have escaped him entirely, and he only thought of the future Mrs. Talbot in a general hazy sort of a way. 'Now there'll be no false sentiments about this,' he confided to his particular friend, Dick Abbey, the first lieutenant of his company. 'I intend to make this purely a matter of business. In the first place I shall select some nice, sensible, well-bred girl, who can pay her own mess bill, state the case to her exactly, show to her the mutual advantages of such a combination, and—presto! the thing is done. Then we'll settle down to a quiet, home-like life, live economically, pay my debts, and become the best of friends in the world. No, sir,' continued Jack, becoming quite animated with his theme, 'no mawkish sentiments for me; given good hard common sense, mutual respect and confidence, and the result is marital happiness.'

“There was an amused smile on Dick Abbey's handsome face, as, after listening to Jack's homily, he said: ‘But, old man suppose the girl says no?’ ‘Oh, come now—she'll hardly say that, you know; marriage is the ultimatum, or rather the mission of all women,’ Jack continued; ‘there are plenty of just the kind of girls I've described to you—that would be glad of the opportunity. Of course,’ he continued, as Dick was about to reply—‘of course I know what you are going to say—that marriage without love means unhappiness, or affectionate toleration, at the most; but really, old man, I think you're entirely wrong; who is it that says, “Even perfect love cannot last more than six years”?’ Can six years of even ideal love repay for years and years of vain regret after the awakening has come, after all illusions have been dispelled, and after the glamour has faded and worn away. Nay, nay, my good Dick, prate me not of woman's love.’ And Jack looked at his companion with an air of triumph, that reminded one strongly of Joe Willet after one of his celebrated arguments.

“‘Well, old fellow, I wish you luck,’ Dick said after some little silence; ‘you know you have my very best wishes, but I would advise you to consider the matter very carefully before taking any action.’ And declining Jack's hospitable offer of a toddy, he bade him a hearty good-night, and left. For some time after his departure Jack sat silently smoking an imported cigar (one of the sacrifices *in futurum*) and busily engaged with the absorbing idea that had lately taken complete possession of him. Clearly his thoughts were of the pleasantest, for his face generally assumed a happy, contented expression until it fairly beamed, and, unable any longer to restrain himself, he burst forth into:

‘Where art thou now, my beloved’—
with (I must confess it) more ardor than harmony.

“ This was an unfortunate proceeding on his part however, for it aroused old Graball, who lived across the hall, and who, as soon as he heard Jack singing, came to his door and proceeded to give a very successful imitation of a dog howling in great pain.

“ For some time the harmonious blending of the voices was kept up, until the absurdity of the situation striking Jack, he ceased singing and burst into a roar of laughter, much to the Quartermaster's distrust and surprise, who thereupon incontinently fled.

“ Peace having been once more restored, the matrimonially disposed warrior donned his cap and cape and proceeded leisurely to the club to give the fellows one more chance before he left forever the charmed but wicked circle of army bachelors. It was a gala night at the club ; somebody was having a birthday, and Talbot's appearance was hailed with cheers and cries of a hearty welcome.

“ All the bachelors were there and a few of the married men whose wives were temporarily sojourning in the East. The affair was highly successful—all bumpers and no heel-taps was the rule—and jollity and good fellowship reigned supreme. It is hard to particularize at this late date all that occurred ; it was even a moderately difficult thing to do the next day ; but the great event of the evening was a song by Captain O'Kelley, which was somewhat interrupted by the actions of the junior Lieutenant of the regiment, who insisted on shaking hands with the Captain after every line or two, and a speech made somewhat later on by Talbot, entitled ‘ Matrimony in the army,’ in which he strongly advocated the marriage of all officers, irrespective of rank.

“ His little effort was well received by all present except a few of the married officers and the irrepressible junior,

who, immediately upon its close, rose somewhat unsteadily to his feet, and with glowing eyes and dishevelled air and manner desired to know if the eloquent orator intended anything personal in his remarks. Having been assured to the contrary, he gravely shook hands with Talbot and disappeared from view, under the table where he contentedly remained until the party broke up in the wee sma' hours of the morning.

“The next morning, in conformity with his new resolutions, Talbot omitted the customary cocktail or bracer, and after the completion of his morning duties proceeded to lay out the plans of his matrimonial campaign.

“Unfortunately for him, there was a scarcity of eligible material in the garrison ; in fact, to be precise, there were only two unmarried girls present—one the sister-in-law of Captain Dalton, temporarily visiting him, and, as she informed everybody, ‘from the East.’

“One requisite of Talbot’s she possessed, viz., money—she had money, and, rumor said, lots of it—but then, poor girl, she needed it.

“A charming thing about our hero was his great love of justice or equity, as he called it, and therefore Miss Manon was duly entered on ‘his list,’ with probable amount of fortune, and traits and characteristics duly added.

“ ‘LIST OF ELIGIBLES.’

“ ‘No. 1, Miss Dalton, &c.,’ &c., and then the list ended.

“The other garrison girl was practically out of the question—that is, from a matrimonial point of view.

“ ‘Dear winsome little Bessie Rawson.’ And Jack thought of her with a sigh—if *she* only had the wherewith ; but it was not to be thought of, and even if she had the

money, there was her father, 'Old Rawson,' to consider, a Captain in the regiment, and one of the worst old reprobates in it.

"Bessie was only nineteen, and Jack had known her during his entire service in the regiment; he had watched her develop from a shy, awkward girl into as dainty and pure a little woman as ever graced the sex; and then she was so pretty, and withal seemed so thoroughly unconscious of the fact.

"As a child she had always been devoted to him, and as they were in the same company, Mr. Talbot soon grew to be Mr. Jack, a custom still rigidly adhered to.

"'No, it won't do,' he exclaimed after some little thought, 'it won't do at all; but then, as she is the only other young girl in the garrison, I'll put her down just to see how it looks.' So down he jotted 'No. 2, Bessie Rawson,' and then quite absent-mindedly added, 'No money, but a fortune in herself.'

"Having exhausted the garrison eligibles, Jack considered the advisability of adding some of the girls he knew way back in the States; but before he could do so, there came a sharp knock at the door, and following it the head of the irrepressible junior, with the invitation 'Come up and see my new fox terrier, Jack; he's a bird; were going to have a christening' and without waiting for a reply, slammed the door and rushed back to his quarters.

"A new dog—that was enough for Jack, and, dropping the list, he started in pursuit of the lucky owner of the fox terrier.

"Now the desk at which he had been writing was nearly in line with one of the windows of his room, and the day being an exceptionally fine one for November, the window had been left open.

“ An hour or two later, when Jack came back, the list had disappeared.

* * * * *

“ Whether the disappearance of the list had anything to do with it, it is hard to say, but the truth is that Jack's matrimonial fever abated somewhat during the next week or so. Not that he had given up the idea ; no, indeed ; he still preached matrimony to the junior (whenever he could get that doughty warrior to listen to him), and religiously adhered to all his good resolutions.

“ November drifted rapidly away, and with December came a cessation of all outside duties, except the absolutely necessary ones, and an increase of gayeties.

“ Jack seemed to share a great deal of Miss Manon's time, and it was soon an understood thing (among the ladies at least) that Mr. Talbot was really in earnest, and that an engagement might be expected soon.

“ During this period Jack saw little of Bessie Rawson ; she attended the hops and parties, but generally attended by the young bachelor Doctor.

“ And what a contrast there was between the girls !

“ Miss Manon was always gorgeous, and Jack, who really had an appreciation for the beautiful, would let his eyes wander towards Miss Rawson, charming and restful in the plainest of gowns.

“ In order to repay some of their social obligations, the bachelors issued invitations for a swell hop on the 24th of December, and Jack (dreadfully pressed by some of his creditors), after carefully considering all the pros and cons, decided to strike the last blow of his campaign on that night.

“ He had no fear of a refusal ; the girl seemed to understand the affair thoroughly ; it certainly was a fair exchange. Miss Manon wanted a husband and he wanted

money, and marriage meant—well, he hardly liked to think what it might mean in the future ; and then there came before him the face of Bessie, with her tender eyes, winsome ways and——

“ P’shaw !—p’raps the girl had never given him a serious thought—he was a fool to think of such things—to be sure, they have always been the best of friends and then p’raps after all Miss Manon might say—No, it was not to be thought of. Money—money—he must have it—he would pay off all his debts ; take a long leave ; do the continent, come back to the regiment and then—we’ll——

“ When Talbot, rather low-spirited and dejected, called for Miss Manon on the night of the 24th, he was positively startled at the girl’s appearance ; she was almost pretty in a becoming gown, and there was a look of suppressed excitement on her face that added very materially to it.

“ And then the bright, happy manner in which she chatted to him ; it was a revelation. ‘ By Jove ! ’ thought he, (‘ she’s not so bad after all ; ’ and by the time they had arrived at the hat-room he was more than half reconciled to his apparent fate. Of course everybody was there, and looking around the room he caught a glimpse of Bessie Rawson and the Doctor comfortably seated in one of the corners of the room, apparently quite contented.

“ She gave him quite the brightest and happiest little smile when she saw him, but before he could get to her she was claimed and whirled out of sight.

“ During the entire evening Talbot was restless and ill at ease.

“ ‘ After all, it wasn’t such an easy thing to propose to a girl.

“ ‘ Of course, if one loved the woman it would be different ; but then to cold-bloodedly ask a girl to marry you,

simply because she had money ; it was a contemptible thing, unmanly, cadish—but in this case quite necessary,' sighed the poor devil, and he waited his chance.

"Just before supper there was an interval of fifteen minutes, and, seizing the opportunity, he asked Miss Manon to take a little stroll out on the porch—'I've something very important to say to you' he continued, noticing her surprised expression, and together they left the hop-room.

"There were few people outside, and they walked up and down for a few minutes in utter silence.

"Presently Jack said :

" 'Miss Manon—I,' and then came to a dead stop.

" 'Yes, Mr. Talbot?' encouragingly.

" 'I—Miss Manon, will you be my wife?'

" 'This is very sudden, Mr. Talbot;' her voice was wonderfully quiet and contained.

" 'Yes, I know it's sudden ; but then I wanted to ask you for some time. Of course I haven't much to offer you. I'm only a poor Lieutenant in a marching regiment on a small salary, but—but—we've known one another for some time now, and you've grown very dear to me, and I'll try to make you happy,' and egged on by the thought of his unappeased creditors, he warmed up to his work and continued in the same strain for some little time.

"She listened silently to all he had to say, and when she raised her face to his, there was a soft light in her eyes and a sweet, tremulous look about the mouth that argued well in his behalf.

" 'And you do love me?' she asked

" 'With all my soul,' came his quiet reply, and Jack bent over until his head was suspiciously close to hers.

"Only a moment, and then with a quick gesture the girl drew herself away—'And now take me in, please.'

“ ‘But your answer?’ he persisted.

“ ‘Shall be my Christmas gift to you to-morrow,’ she replied with a bright smile, and with this he was fain to rest content.

* * * * *

“ For some time after the hop Jack sat in front of the comfortable fire in his quarters smoking and thinking over the night's incidents.

“ The girl really loved him and would make him a good wife—that was evident ; and he—well, he liked her fairly well. To be sure, he hadn't told the exact truth ; but what was a man to say to a woman who asked such embarrassing questions —

“ ‘And you do love me?’

“ Why, of course he loved her (in a way), and no doubt in a year or so of married life would become quite fond of her, and, humming softly to himself, he put out the lamp and went to bed.

* * * * *

“ The next morning, when Jack came to breakfast at the mess, he found all the fellows there, and lying in front of his plate two envelopes addressed to him.

“ He recognized Miss Manon's writing at once—but the other—‘why certainly it was Bessie's,’ and Jack opened it first.

‘GARRISON, Dec. 25th, 18—.

‘My Dear Mr. Jack :

‘Do you remember a promise I made you, when I was a little girl (years ago), that I would tell you of my first proposal? Well, it has come, and I want to be the first to tell you of my engagement to Dr. Roberts.’

“ But Jack read no more.

“ ‘So Bessie Rawson was engaged? well what of it? wasn't he—or just about to be’—and then he slowly opened the other envelope.

“Great Heavens! what was this? a sheet of weather-stained and soiled paper; he unfolded it almost mechanically, and there he saw staring him in the face the lost ‘List of Eligibles,’ and beneath it, in Miss Manon’s writing: ‘It’s an ill wind that blows nobody good’—and the bachelors were all surprised when Talbot suddenly exclaimed: ‘“Damn the wind”—and left the table, his breakfast untouched.”

“A beautiful moral lesson—in one respect at least, Mr. Briggs,” was the Colonel’s comment, “and I’m glad to learn that manners and morals have both improved in Talbot’s regiment since the days of which you tell. Now Captain Rowan, mighty hunter of the—th, people down this end of the table are clamoring to hear from you.”

“But I haven’t any Christmas story handy,” said the tall company commander, a bronzed, soldierly man who looked the stories told of him—that years of his life had been spent scouting, hunting, campaigning from Assiniboia to the Gulf. “I never saw spirits or ghosts, like X. and never knew Briggs’ friend Talbot——”

“I’ll tell you when you saw ghosts—Indian ghosts, Rowan. That was the time you were chased into Wallace. Tell us about that,” called Captain Wayne.

“Well—that’s something that might happen to anybody,” laughed Rowan. “I call it my first experience with

CHILL AND FEVER.

CHILL.

“Probably but a small proportion of those who read of the wonderful sand-storms and mirages of the African deserts are aware that the same, phenomena on almost as large a scale can be seen in our own country. Along

the borders of some of the streams of Oklahoma, on the plains of eastern Washington and Oregon, as well as on the Gila desert in Arizona, the sand-dunes change their forms with every passing wind, and the dry and shimmering plains of Kansas and Nebraska, as well as those near Laramie and on the upper course of the Rio Grande, furnish miragic views which astonish and charm the beholder. Wide-spreading lakes tantalize the unsophisticated traveler or hunter ; a buffalo skull with a raven perched upon it becomes a white steed bearing a sable rider ; the coyote sneaking across the field of vision a mile away assumes the proportion of a lion, and, in the days of buffalo, a herd seemed often aerial nondescripts, deriving sustenance from the air in which they were apparently floating.

“ Prior to the opening of the Kansas Pacific Railway, and in fact, down to the 70's, the whole of the country lying west of the settlements in Kansas, and along the Platte, swarmed with game of all kinds peculiar to the plains. Officers of the army stationed on the routes in Kansas, could at times count buffalo by thousands, while standing at their doors ; antelope dotted the prairie in all directions, or, gathered in bands of hundreds, in the autumn furnished sport for the hunter, as well as the finest of meat for the soldiers' table. In the timber along some of the streams deer could be found, and among the rocky and storm-worn bluffs bordering other portions of the larger water-courses ' black-tails ' or ' mule deer ' repaid the toil of the sportsman. There was a spice of danger, too, to give a zest to the sport, and it was not certain that the hunter would not become the hunted, if he ventured far away from his ' base ' at the post or camp of the military, or the train of wagons with which he was traveling.

“Fort Wallace was situated on the Smoky Hill Run, about 420 miles west of Kansas City, on the line of the stage-road from that place to Denver, and was for about three years my army home. Directly across the insignificant rivulet called ‘the river,’ and about two and a half miles from the garrison, the steep bluffs bordering the valley were broken into rough, rocky defiles and cañons, and in them a herd of ‘black-tails’ had frequently been seen, during the summer and early autumn of ’70. No signs of Indians had been discovered near the place for over a year, and, thinking the venture a comparatively safe one, one November morning concluded to ‘try for’ a deer. My own hunting-pony was not at hand, and I borrowed from the corral one which had been picked up on the prairie some time during the season, and would stand fire without flinching. In fact, he would *stand* anything, and stand it all day, and as for speed, any good train-ox could outrun him, and he was warranted to endure any amount of ‘heel-persuasion’ his rider had leisure or disposition to bestow upon him. But I had no thought that speed would be required of him that day; and leashing my dog, a powerful and speedy lurcher, I started early for the haunts of the deer.

“The morning was cold, and over the lower grounds along the river a thick fog hid most of the country from view, and I found it yet more dense in the ‘breaks’ among the bluffs. Still, as I had a favorable wind, and could see a short distance, I carefully picked my way among the rocks, hoping to get a shot at short range. As the sun rose the fog became less opaque, and above it I could see the highest points of the bluffs, when suddenly, from just at the feet of my pony, a jack-rabbit sprang up and hopped leisurely away. The sight was too tempting for the dog’s obedience. A plunge or two parted the leash

at his collar, and away went game and hound at racing speed, up the ravine. I followed at the best rate of speed I could get out of the pony over the rocky ground, but by the time I had gained the head of the gorge, for such it became before reaching the prairie, the game had time to have left the country. A thin haze then hid the face of the landscape, and I could not trail the dog on the hard soil. I was at a loss which direction to take, but rode to the summit of the nearest swell of ground in the vicinity, to reconnoiter. Nothing could be seen of the dog, and I was turning the pony's head to try another direction, when I saw something that drove dog and rabbit out of my thoughts. My heart gave one bound, and stopped beating for an instant, and the cold sweat stood out in bead-like drops on my face, while down my spine ran a chill that was ice-like in its intensity. Not more than a quarter of a mile away, on the next rise of ground, half a dozen swarthy figures loomed above the fog, and stood out in bold relief against the horizon, and while I looked others cantered up. Then, at a gallop, they started in my direction. 'How fleet is a glance of the mind!' I was at least six miles from the post, on a pony whose best speed I could almost equal if on foot, if I chose to try the ravine for shelter. I might not at once find a place where they could be descended by my animal, and, once in them, I was liable to be lost in the fog, only to be found when it cleared away, with my retreat cut off—if I ran for home. I must ride at least three miles before I could get to a point where my flight could be seen by friends, and assistance sent. All this and more went through my mind like an electric thrill, and whirling the pony sharply to the left, I plied the 'government brass' in a way that astonished him, and got all the speed out of him that was possible. As I looked back I could see the

heads of my pursuers, rising and falling upon the mist, though apparently not gaining much. Half a mile to the eastward of what I had supposed to be my position when I started, the descent from the high prairie was smooth and easy, and I had directed my course for that point. But I found that I had lost the direction, and was stopped by the perpendicular wall of a branch ravine, which gave no foot-hold for man or beast; so turning squarely to my right, I continued my flight in that direction. As I changed I looked back, but the fog hid my enemy from view. A few hundred yards on I reached the head of the ravine, and turning again to the left, rode in the direction of the garrison. But the pace was telling on my steed, and it was only by constant use of the spur that I could keep him in even a moderate canter. My only hope was that he could hold out till I could reach the brow of the slope, whence smoke of shots could be seen at the post; then shooting him, use his body as a defence, and make the best fight I could, trusting that succor would reach me as soon as possible. By the time he reached it he was down to a walk, and finding a slight 'wash-out,' just at the brow, from which I could see the post, I halted to fight it out. As I faced southward, I found that a slight breeze, before which I had been running, had dispersed the fog behind me, and my pursuers were nowhere to be seen. While I looked, my dog, following the trail of my horse, came into view where I had struck the ravine, and a few hundred yards in his rear were my pursuers—a *band of eleven antelopes*. The dog, which was nearly white, had killed or lost his game, and, returning to me, had attracted their attention, and, with the curiosity which lures so many of them to their death, they were following him.

“The reaction was in a degree pleasant, but, the tension

gone, I found myself too weak to ride, and man and horse took a good long rest before going on to the fort.

“ I said nothing of my stampede, till after I had heard an older officer tell how he was ‘scared out of his boots’ at the sight of a herd of elk on Laramie plains, thinking them Indian ponies ; then I could afford to tell it.

II. FEVER.

“ The plains of Western Kansas furnish a rich field for ‘the fossil-hunters.’ They have in pre-historic ages been the bed of a shallow sea, and in the blue shale, which underlies most of their area, and crops out to the surface in the sides of the wind and rain-swept ‘buttes,’ the geologist and paleontologist find many rare and valuable specimens. During the years in which I served in that region, several of the first scientists of the country paid visits to the sections lying about Forts Hayes and Wallace, and their discoveries were very valuable. They generally came to the posts provided with letters or orders from Department Commanders, or from the Secretary of War, directing commanding officers to furnish them with such escorts as could be spared, and the duty was one sought after by both officers and enlisted men. ‘The professors’ were generally genial men, good talkers, and ready to impart information to any one who wished it. One, a naturalist, who looked after the things of the present as well as of the past ages, created a commotion at a dinner table one day, when a small snake, which, for want of a better place to confine it, he had placed in an inside pocket of his coat, and covered with his handkerchief, escaped from it to the table, just as the company had seated themselves. The ophidian was harmless as my antelopes, but the stampede was as bad as mine, and the really strange and beautiful ‘sarpint’

was mashed out of all its proportions by the boot-heel of one of the gentlemen present, before it could be re-captured by its possessor.

“But ‘the champion bone-hunter,’ as he was designated by the soldiers, was a professor of paleontology from one of the principal eastern colleges, who was accustomed to make extended tours with classes of students of his favorite science, and who, except in the instance about to be related, had no use for any bones which did not antedate Old Father Adam, and the farther back they had existed, the better. Not *wagon*-loads only, but *car*-loads of fossils were found and shipped by him, and he was known to have worked for days, with a pick and spade, unearthing a single specimen.

“His first visit was made the next autumn after the events already related had occurred. With a dozen or more of students, he had spent weeks in the valley of Snake River, in Idaho, and, on his way back to the East, stopped at Fort Wallace, with three or four of his party. His time was limited, but he wished to take a look at the country, and to see a buffalo-hunt, as he had not seen any of the animals in a wild state. They could be found within a few miles of the post, and the morning after his arrival two officers, with about half a dozen mounted soldiers, reported as his escort for the hunt. His party were furnished an ambulance for the trip, and I handed him a rifle and forty rounds of ammunition. The students had their own Winchesters. He expressed his thanks, but said he did not need it, ‘had no thoughts of doing any shooting, was only going to look on,’ etc., but yielded on being told that no one was allowed to leave the post without being armed. The ground selected was that over which I had been the time before alluded to, as an examination of the rock-formations could be made better

there than elsewhere near the post, and the officers took seats with the party for the time, leading their saddled horses, while the mounted enlisted men accompanied a wagon taken along to bring in the beef. Only a cursory examination of the rocky defiles was made, the savant deciding at once that they contained no fossils, and the party was soon near the head of one of the ravines, from which egress to the prairie above was practicable for vehicles. A man, sent ahead to reconnoiter, reported several small herds on the prairie not far away, and tightening their pistol-belts, and the 'cinches' of their saddles, the officers threw their outer coats into the ambulance, and mounted for the run. The 'fossil-party' were told that they could see most of the chase from some rising ground half a mile ahead, to which the driver was directed to proceed, and also cautioned to keep a look-out for other of the game, which was probably in other ravines, and would run for the prairie as soon as they 'winded' the hunters.

"As the mounted men reached the upland, probably two thousand buffalo, in small herds, were in sight, some of them not more than two hundred yards away. The charge was ordered, and, 'every man for himself,' the hunters started. I kept up the chase till both my revolvers were emptied, and had dropped three, and then pulled up to find myself alone, and more than a mile from the nearest hunter.

"There was always one danger in running buffalo in the Indian Country. The hunter, engrossed solely in the pursuit of his game, lost all idea of course or distance, and a run of four or five miles was not an unusual thing, and at the end of that the sportsman found himself alone on the prairie, with empty pistols and a tired-out steed, in a most defenceless state if suddenly attacked.

“I was soon joined by the other officer, and we waited for the wagon to come up and get our game, in the mean time scanning the ground along the horizon for some sign of the ambulance. But we looked in vain, and as soon as the beef was loaded we retraced our steps in search of the Professor. Nearly two miles back we met one of the party, his face wearing a disgusted look, as though *he* did not think much of buffalo-hunting. To our inquiries about the others he replied,—

“ ‘I don’t know where they are. The driver took us up to that place you pointed out, and just as we reached it a small herd came rushing up from the ravines, and “the old man” told us to get out and get a shot, and as we jumped out another herd came along, and he told the driver to drive on, and left us out in the cold, and by that time the herd we had first seen had run off out of reach. The last I saw of the team it was away off in that direction (pointing to the southwest), and I think it was running away.’

“Turning in the direction indicated, we galloped off in search of the lost man, and rode nearly two miles before, as much farther away, we saw the ambulance halted, and a man apparently at work on a carcass. Riding up, we found the team all right, and the Professor at work. He *was* a sight! Had killed a young bull (as the driver told it, ‘had filled him too full of lead for him to carry’), had lost his hat, and in lieu of it had tied a white handkerchief about his head,—thrown off his coat, and, with only a knife ‘hacked worse than two saws,’ and which had been used all the trip for digging fossils, he was endeavoring to cut off the animal’s head as a trophy. His hands and arms were bloody, his face dripped with perspiration, and in trying to wipe it away he had forgotten that his hands were bloody, and had stained face, hair

and the handkerchief with gore, till he looked worse than a Chicago butcher. We sent the driver back to bring up the wagon, and then proceeded to assist in getting off the skin, as he said he must have it dressed and the head mounted. After he had returned to the post, had a bath, and cooled down mentally, he began to think how he must have looked and acted, and after his return to the East it was soon a tabooed subject. The driver's story, told to his fellows, was expressed in language more forcible than eloquent. Leaving out the expletives, it was about as follows :

“ ‘*He* wasn't goin' to shoot no buffalo ! Oh, no ! But after he got them young fellows out, he jest went plumb crazy, an' when about the third bunch of 'em run past, he poked his gun out past my head an' fired right over my mules, an' they *went* in spite o' me. His hat blowed off, and I wanted to go back fur it, but he sung out not to mind the hat, but go on, and bime by he banged away again, and then the buffaler stopped, an' I began to circle 'round him, and then the old fellow jumped out and was goin' to run right up on him ; till I hollowed that he'd git listed if he did, and then he jest stood off, and pumped lead into him till he dropped. Talk about “ buck ager ”—if he didn't have “ buffaler fever ” I'm a tender-foot.’

“ The Professor came back the next year, and with him came one of the same party. Scarcely had we shaken hands when he said, ‘ Don't say buffalo to the old gentleman,—it is a sore subject.’ ”

“ And now it is time we had a love story,” exclaimed Mrs. Grace. “ And there's one man at least whom I know will do the subject justice. Most of you have no idea of it. Come, Major,” and she glanced at a tall, soldierly fellow sitting about midway along the joyous line

to her left. All eyes are already centred on him. In love or war "the Major" was regarded as thoroughly at home.

"Drive on, Major. If any one has been there, it's you," exclaimed Briggs from his seat across the board.

No direct reply was vouchsafed the light-hearted young gentleman. With much dignity of mien the Major waited until the applause which greeted this especial call had subsided, bowed to the lady of the bright blue eyes and then to the table collectively, and began.

TOM CARRINGTON'S CHRISTMAS GIFT.

"Lieutenant Tom Carrington accounted himself an invulnerable man so far as matters affecting the heart were concerned. He had gone through 'West Point' a shining light in the 'Bachelors' Club,' the only known departure from the tenets of his faith having been an enforced five minutes' chat with Miss Mabel Stoughton, as he stood in his official capacity, watch in hand, at the door of the hop-room, waiting to give that awful signal which put an abrupt termination to tête-à-têtes, and stilled the glowing words upon beardless lips. This interview, short and unsought as it was, brought upon him some measure of suspicion, but he heroically lived it down and went out into the world the following June, with an escutcheon undimmed by any act of abrogation of his oath. But five minutes' conversation with Miss Mabel Stoughton was apt to create strange havoc even in the strong-hold of youthful susceptibility, and as Tom Carrington walked to camp that night he was forced to acknowledge to himself a remarkably pleasant sensation, and he seemed to hear a faint melody as of silver bells, which he coupled with Mabel's voice and before his eyes was the remem-

bered glint upon 'curls of summer gold,' enframing a fair young face. But he shook himself together and devoted the rest of the night to the 'plebs' who were on guard, who, could they have known the cause of his extra attention to duty, would in their hearts have heartily cursed that five minutes' delay in the beating of the drum.

"In the winter of 188- the Judith Basin was sparsely settled—only here and there, and that at long intervals, low, rambling sheep-sheds proclaimed the nearness of a Ranch. Time-honored signs had given the ranchmen ample indications of the coming of a rigorous winter, and fabulous wood-piles and tons of well-stacked hay stood as answer to the warning. Beyond the mountains, mostly amid the foot-hills, a few hastily constructed huts served as shelter to a little colony of soldiers, dropped there as a nucleus of an army post. Herds of buffalo ranged over the rolling prairie-land towards the west, and among the foot-hills elk and deer and antelope, grouse and prairie-hen were as yet innocent of the invasion of their realm. Centrally through the valley a rushing, bubbling trout stream tumbled its limpid waters toward the Mussel-shell, musical in its flow, freighted with the traditions of the hills. And these stately hills, stretching north and south in rugged, wild upheaval, hiding the crimson and passionate hues outlining the purple shadows of the west from the gentler suggestions of the nascent day, like kingly sentinels in crest and nodding plume, dominated the far reaches of nature's gentler aspect, toward the rising and the setting sun. Busily the little colony worked from dawn to dark upon the rude shelters which were their only hope against the ruder blasts and snows of coming winter; already the voices of the pines upon the mountain were hoarse and muttering, and here and there a peak, higher than its neighbors, had caught the hoary mask of Time and proclaimed the

already numbered days of the fading year. Bedecked in sombre vestment, the darkening mountain lay waiting for the shock of winter's battle, with here and there a crimson gleam of ivy showing, like a 'rose which the west has flung' within the coil of a woman's raven hair while along its rugged sides the echoes played of hammer and axe and human call from the busy slope below. But time and labor accomplish most things and November's sway had scarce begun when the little garrison was snug as need be for the winter. Only a couple of companies constituted the garrison, with a Major in command, and two short of the half-dozen officers whose names were borne upon the rolls; but, then, there was the Dr., and he was worth the other two and one to spare, beside.

"There had been a good deal of speculation among the juniors as to why the Major insisted upon that extra room with two windows, with a southern exposure, especially as time was limited and the men overworked beside, and when, upon mutual inspection and comparison of the preparation for the long months to come, the dainty fitting of this apartment was revealed to their astonished gaze, with its light oak furnishing and accessory of blue and white, its heavy rugs and bright warm curtains ready to swing into graceful folds in opposition to encroaching blasts, 'Confusion was worse confounded,' and Mrs. Wilder vouchsafed no explanation and the Major held his peace as a wise and dutiful husband should.

"A couple of evenings later, Dr. Archer and Lieutenant Bliss, of the —th foot, were seated within the rather narrow limits of that particular log hut which had been reared for the accommodation of themselves and one other, and which had been considered in the present emergency adequate to the dignity of their rank and years, and were in the enjoyment of one of those pauses in their game of

chess which the replenishment of the fire and their pipes required, and had, for the moment, forgotten the very threatening attitude which the Dr.'s Queen's Bishop had, by a masterly play just assumed, to discuss the important matter as to whether lemon was an adjunct or real necessity in a 'hot scotch' brew—when Lieutenant Tom Carrington and a gust of wind darted simultaneously into the room to the extinguishment of the light and the temporary change of subject. 'Why the devil don't you come down the chimney, Tom, or give notice of your approach—one might prepare against the combination of Tom Carrington and Boreas in such a case.'

" 'Teddy, I'm truly sorry, for light has such a mellowing influence upon your voice and,' scratching a match, 'I'll wager anything that you fellows are in your hearts glad to be rid of the sight of each other even for a moment; but, there you are again, so take up the thread of your argument, and peace be unto you,' and Mr. Carrington began softly whistling an air from Erminie, as he divested himself of top-coat and boots, and encased his feet in his slippers and his form in his smoking jacket. 'By the way, did anybody say—Welcome! Tom? for if not, there may be a dearth of information, which I am prepared to impart.'

" 'Welcome! Tom—thrice welcome!' came in chorus from two pairs of healthy lungs. What is it? Hurry up, delays are dangerous—suspense, death.'

" 'Gently, gentlemen; gentle subjects should be approached with deference, and, indeed, upon second thought, I think it hardly decorous to utter a young lady's name in an atmosphere reeking with tobacco and lemon and things, as this is. I won't; but shall simply content myself with the announcement that unto the house of Mrs. Major Wilder a guest is coming for the

winter, and that guest is a young lady, and that now the mystery of the "spare-room" is settled and that to-morrow I, Thomas Carrington of the —th foot, depart upon a journey, "and further deponent saith not,"" and the notes of the lullaby song in Erminie fell upon the air once more, and a wreath of smoke from the lips of Lieutenant Carrington went curling toward the mantel, in an interval of pause.

" 'And is that all that we are to hear ; will your Lordship deign not one other word upon this momentous matter,' exclaimed Teddy Bliss with a tone of genuine exasperation.

" 'The subject is dismissed, gentlemen ; you may resume your game,' remarked Carrington with the mock tones of a commanding officer ; and the others knew, with all his assumed mannerism, that he had his own reasons for saying no more upon the subject ; but Teddy Bliss could not resist the temptation of a final word which assumed the rather indefinite form of—' Well, I'll be ——'

" 'Indeed you will, Teddy,' interrupted Carrington, 'if you do not control that unruly member,' and with the expression of the hope that his companions might have sweet repose, happy dreams, sweet tempers and patience, he filed into the little alcove which he designated his 'sleeping apartment' and disappeared for the night.

"By way of preparation, not only for the expected visitor, but also for the long months of isolation staring the little garrison in the face, Major Wilder had despatched an 'escort wagon' to the nearest town (some hundred miles distant) for such articles of comfort and luxury as the Inspector General had not recommended as necessary or advisable among the 'stores which may be sold for cash' to officers of the U. S. Army, and this wagon was to call on its return at a certain ranch in the Judith Basin

for such luggage as Miss Mabel Stoughton might see fit to turn over to its driver, which latter part of the programme had remained a matter 'lacking announcement' until a few moments before Lieutenant Carrington's abrupt entrance into the society of the Doctor and Lieutenant Bliss, and the subsequent interchange of the amenities of social converse cited above.

"On this particular evening, with some degree of mental speculation as to the nature of Mrs. Wilder's 'matter of importance' concerning which she wished to see Lieutenant Carrington, that young gentleman had hastened to her quarters, and had received so much of the information regarding the matter at issue as has been already imparted to the reader—and more. Partially in fulfillment, Mrs. Wilder explained, of a long-standing engagement with her Boston friend and schoolmate, Miss Edith Barnes, whose father was trying the experiment of a 'Sheep Ranch' in the Judith Basin, in the hope of regaining some of the health which the east-wind of Boston had seriously impaired, and partly that she might be within hailing distance, as it were, of his half-sister, Mrs. Wilder, when that lady should be ready to receive her, Miss Stoughton had been only a day's ride from them for several weeks, and the appointed time of her visit to the post had arrived. The Major had intended riding over for her himself, but he was suffering so much with his old enemy, the gout, that he found it impossible to go and, would not Lieutenant Carrington come to the rescue? She knew she could trust Mabel to him, knowing that he would take the best of care of her. He could go over on the following day and return the next, staying the intervening night at the ranch. Of Miss Mabel Stoughton's relationship to Mrs. Major Wilder the young man had been profoundly ignorant till that very moment. In

the one year and a half he had been away from the 'academy,' his mind had often reverted to that five minutes at the hop-room door, and always with a certain thrill of pleasure which he could not understand. He had never, that he remembered, met any one quite so fair as she had seemed to him during the shortness of his interview—'the rose lip's witching glow' upon the cheek, her golden hair, the tone of her low and musical voice, he had often thought of them; but he had never thought to meet her again. There had been no 'bliss at meeting, no parting pain.' She had been but a fair figure upon the fair earth, as it passed by his point of view, so that Mrs. Wilder's request somewhat staggered him.

"'I am always at your service, Mrs. Wilder,' he replied, 'and shall be most happy, if you think the young lady will not fear to venture—what did you say was the name?'" and as he heard it repeated he looked as though it had never dwelt pleasantly upon his ear before, and felt as though that kind destiny, which shapes our ends, overshadowed him.

"As Carrington approached the ranch the following afternoon the tones of a piano smote upon his ear in accompaniment to two voices, which came to him

'Like the sweet South
That breathes upon a bank of violets;'

so he paused and listened till the music ceased, and, looking far off toward the distant hills, over the stretches of lonely prairie, into the unfathomable depths of trackless grass-land innocent of human habitation, thought how little it took to give the semblance of beauty to the world's waste places. But if his surprise were great, it was not more so than that of the two young ladies who, hearing the sound of wheels, turned to look upon the tall, handsome

young officer who was reining in at the door and who a moment later presented his credentials in form of a letter from Mrs. Wilder. There was no instant recognition on Miss Mabel's part of her former unwilling captive. His appearance seemed to feebly awaken some memory, but nothing very tangible; not till the drift of conversation led back to the 'Point' and individual experience there, did it dawn upon her that in her coming escort she beheld the 'member in good standing' of the 'Bachelor Club.'

" 'It was very good of you, Mr. Carrington, to so far subdue your principles as to consent to an eight-hour drive with a young lady to whom you once begrudged five minutes,' remarked Miss Mabel as that evening they were speaking of the morrow's ride.

" 'I think my principles only awaked, where your sex is concerned, after graduation, Miss Stoughton. I hadn't quite formed any before; I was rather afraid of the subject, you see,' replied Carrington. 'Really, though, I hope to atone for any past sins of omission by religious devotion to your sex in the future. Pray accept yourself my first cry of surrender.'

" 'It will be hard upon you, I know, but I will promise to be very generous and help you through the ordeal,' said Mabel; 'but tell me, Mr. Carrington, did you ever forgive me for entrapping you that night?'

" 'I think the drum was all that saved me from absolute capitulation—there is a note of forgiveness in that confession, is there not?' answered Carrington.

" As they were talking, the rumble of wheels heralded the approach of the wagon, and as the start was to be an early one, the young lady's trunks were loaded that night, and the next morning, before the sun had climbed one-third the way to the zenith, Carrington and his fair charge were bowling along toward the Judith River.

“It was Sunday morning and there was a Sabbath tone in the air, and Carrington stole a glance at the lovely girl beside him; he did not wonder that it ‘seemed no task for the sun to shine upon so fair a picture.’ Altogether the young gentleman’s state was a happy one, and he mentally evoked a blessing upon the Major for his opportune attack of gout, upon Mrs. Wilder, first, for having so sweet a sister, and again for her part in his assignment to the pleasant duty before him—blessed that strange fate, in fine, which had laid his lines in such pleasant places. But a single little cloud drifted across the sky of his content, which assumed the features of that arch-tormentor, Mr. Teddy Bliss. He could hear in anticipation that young man’s congratulations upon his success in having achieved a triumph over his well-known diffidence; he could hear the pointed shafts which should inquire as to the probable duration of his willingness to associate with ordinary humanity, and whether he (Teddy) would be expected to indulge a new suit in view of the coming event; he knew he would stop at nothing, and he was very fond of Teddy, but—‘well, if he does I shall simply choke him, and that’s all about it,’ was his mental resolve.

“‘What did you say, Mr. Carrington?’ inquired Miss Mabel, rather astonished at the unexpectedness of this last part of Tom’s unwittingly-outspoken resolve; ‘whom do you wish to choke; not me, I trust!’

“‘I beg pardon,’ pleaded Carrington; ‘I was thinking of——’

“‘Never mind his name,’ interrupted Mabel, ‘but please retain your faculties in this immediate vicinity; that off-horse of yours will need all the attention which I can afford to dispense with myself.’

“‘Oh, he’s all right; he has only caught the infection

of happiness from his master ; besides, he is proud of his burden to-day.'

"And at that moment a 'coyote' slunk across the road, and his horse, not liking the skulking brute's appearance, made a dash for freedom, and for a couple of hundred yards Carrington had his hands full ; but he presently quieted them down, and, looking at Mabel, who had behaved admirably, remarked : 'Splendid, Miss Stoughton ; you're a trump !'

" 'Thank you,' said Mabel, who was pale as death, but could not resist the interrogatory : 'Of what suit, Mr. Carrington ?'

" 'Hearts, of course ; but here's the river ;' and Carrington noticed that under the influence of the 'Chinook,' which had come up in the night, it had risen, and he concluded to see the wagon over safely before crossing himself.

"Looking at his watch, he found it just high noon, and a few moments later the wagon came rumbling down the hill behind them, and, at a sign from him, dashed into the stream, struck boldly across, and, when nearly at the other bank, stalled. There was a led horse behind the wagon, and he, taking advantage of the situation, proceeded to drink ; but scarcely had his lips touched the water when there came from up the river a sound as of a dozen cannons, and a moment later huge blocks of ice, impelled with terrific speed, bore down upon the stalled wagon. Faster and faster came the ice ; higher and higher it piled against the wagon's side, which now listed down stream. A moment more and animals and vehicle would be swept away in the irresistible flow. 'Cut the traces and save the animals and yourself,' shouted Carrington, which, with the assistance of a man to whom he had given a 'lift,' the driver was able to do,

and an instant later down the seething, on-rushing, pitiless flood, wagon and led-horse—first one on top, then the other—disappeared round a curve, five hundred feet below. Carrington's first thought was of Mabel's trunks, and they found expression :

“ ‘My God ! Miss Stoughton, your trunks, your trunks !’

“ ‘I was thinking of that poor horse,’ she said ; ‘if only you can save him ! His look of dumb despair will haunt me forever.’

“ ‘That's the gentlewoman of it,’ said Carrington. ‘Wait here till I run down the bank, the wagon may have lodged,’ and true enough, hurled by the force of the water in a head of the stream, it had been thrown upon a sand-bar high and dry, or nearly so, and in the midst, with a look of patient inquiry upon his face, stood the led-horse, intact. To cross themselves was impossible, and their wagon was ruined, the hind wheels gone and it a wreck.

Mr. Carrington's trying situation had hitherto been the result of a sympathetic relationship with the heroes of those sensational works which had chanced to come to his notice ; the last few moments had assigned to himself the principal part in what seemed to him a most tragic one. Retreat was impossible, for behind him every ‘coulee’ by this time was a torrent itself ; he felt himself impelled to quick and decisive action.

“ ‘Miss Stoughton,’ he said ; ‘our position is one of the most extreme embarrassment ; we can neither go back or forward. I shall send one of these men to the Post for succor. Will you give yourself into my keeping, freely, as my own sister would, feeling that I will care for you as tenderly. Your bed must be upon the prairie, but with the wraps and robe in the buggy I can at least shelter you from cold.’

“Mabel Stoughton had as stout a heart as ever beat within a woman's breast, but certainly it was put now to a crucial test. She had lost everything and now found herself, at the approach of night, alone upon the broad prairie with a man whom she had known for five minutes only, before he had come, the night previous, to take her for an eight hours' ride through an almost uninhabited country, but that man wore the cloth which proclaimed to her the gentleman in every man who donned it and she never faltered. She saw Carrington's distress and pitied him. Putting her little hand in his, she looked up to him with eyes all full of pity and of trust, and simply said: ‘Fate has overtaken us, my friend; we will brave it out together.’

“‘God bless you!’ he answered; ‘you have given me the fairest glimpse of womanhood I have ever known.’

“It was long after midnight—the moon had been looking calmly down, shedding a dower of light upon the earth and silvering the surface of the rushing water. Scarcely a breath of air was stirring, but it was growing colder. High up above the tree-tops, over in the west, a few clouds came drifting lazily along—occasionally a moan came from the distant hillside—the bark of a dog, distant, indistinct, from somewhere beyond the river, fell upon the watcher's ears, sharp, insistent—an owl's unfriendly hoot sounded in hollow mockery—the shadows which the moon had painted lengthened out into the plain, shifting slowly and in grotesque shapes—the weird impressions of the night filled all of Nature's spaces. Carrington was looking with some dread at the drifting clouds, knowing that in every one of them was ‘some story of storm to come or past,’ and he prayed that God would temper the wind to his precious charge. Just then a coyote barked and Mabel awoke.

“ ‘Were you praying, Mr. Carrington?’ she asked.

“ ‘Execrating that coyote for having disturbed you Miss Stoughton.’

“ ‘No, sir! you were praying, and I waked up to say Amen! good-night,’ she said.

‘ ‘And the stillness was unbroken
And the silence gave no token,’

till by and by a faint flush crept over the eastern hills and brought across the ‘threshold of the skies’ the blessedness of dawn.

“An inspection of the river discovered the feasibility of crossing; the waters which the day before had burst through the the ice-dam, carrying ruin in their path, had passed by, leaving a wreck to tell the story of their fury—now the stream flowed musically on and nothing barred the way to progress. The ominous clouds which had so disturbed Carrington during the night had dissolved, the canopy of heaven was one unbroken field of blue and, as the pink of dawn brightened into the golden glory of day, the travelers left the river behind them and headed for the distant hills. Midway between the scene of their mishap and the post they met the relief party, which they sent to gather up what they could from the wreck and, a couple of hours later, Carrington deposited his charge at the door of the Major’s hut and in the arms of her anxious sister. Leaving her, Carrington said, ‘You will understand, if I do not call this evening?’ and for a moment Mabel did not understand, but an instant later she appreciated his thoughtful kindness and thanked him in her heart.

“Of course, speculation as to the non-appearance of the travelers was rife throughout the little settlement the night before; the Major’s gout, owing to his excited state

of mind, gave him an added twinge, which in no way tended to temper his irascibility. Mrs. Wilder, kind and gentle woman that she was, felt that some good reason had detained them ; but Mrs. McFarlane, whose forty-five years of 'following the drum' had been innocent of any known expression of charitable thought for any human being, shook her head ominously, till the little curls at the back of her neck danced like puppets upon the expanding field of her fair shoulders. To her Lieut. Teddy Bliss felt himself constrained, in defence of his friend, to remark that he had known Miss Stoughton for some time, and Lieut. Carrington for years—that both belonged to that category of gentility to whom a compromising situation was impossible, and that he regretted the enforced conviction that there were some people, who did not, with which satisfying shot he left the object of his remarks to pursue undisturbed her communing with the stars, and passed on and into the seclusion of his own domain. Mabel, as was to be expected, took the garrison by storm ; her beauty, the gracious and gentle manner which she had for all, from the Major down to the striker, won her only friends, and under the modifying influences which she exerted, even Teddy Bliss dropped his cynicism and became a wonder of metamorphosis.

“The last month of the year had come and the storm kings were gathering their forces ; the little garrison gave over its excursions to distant points, in deference to the ominous mutterings of winter. Cards and cosy little suppers, rambles over the neighboring hills, and occasional forays upon the Ranch, down the valley, filled up the spaces of their time. Carrington had no occasion to 'choke' Teddy Bliss ; that young gentleman's views of life underwent perceptible modification, and few were

the days when, at one hour or another, he did not saunter over to the Major's 'for the bracer the sight of that splendid girl gives one, you know,' as he said to the Doctor. Carrington's position toward the young lady he defined more accurately himself than others who had busied themselves in the matter. He had become very fond of Mabel, of course, as had everybody, but he had said no word of love to her; he did not flatter himself that she would be inclined to listen if he did; the accident that had thrown them together, under circumstances out of common, had no bearing, to his mind, upon the case at all—in fact, it would have rather had the effect of retarding any declaration, had he thought of making one. Once or twice, of a night, when he and Teddy and the Doctor were sitting round the blazing logs, within the enclosure of their own four walls, and, tired of talk, had settled themselves, with their pipes, for a little self-communing, before bidding each other and the world good-night, his fancy had wrought out of the glowing coals pictures fair to look upon, and from out the picture looking up at him were eyes of heaven's own blue, and within his own, a little hand, soft and warm, lay passively, with now and then a gentle pressure responsive to a heart-beat, and as the ashes settled white and thick upon the embers, and the fading light had its suggestion of clouds drifting across his sky (the shadows of earthly trouble), the pressure of the hand grew stronger, and from out the gloom a soft, sweet voice seemed to come laden with the tones of comfort and the accents of hope, and, yielding to the soothing influences of the hour, and of his fancy, he would close his eyes and let this 'dream of delicate beauty melt into his heart's recess.'

"The Christmas season was fast approaching, and evergreens and rose-berries and such pretty grasses as reared

their nodding tassels above the snow were brought into requisition wherewith to bedeck their humble dwellings, and on Christmas eve there had been a supper party and some singing at the Major's, and Teddy had announced that he proposed to hang up his stocking and thought, considering his youth, that Carrington should do the same, and the ladies had all agreed that if they did they should find them filled in the morning, and Carrington had asked 'Mabel' what he might expect from her, and she had told him that really she did not know; that, after Mr. Bliss' remark, she should have to think of something suited to his years, at which Mrs. Wilder spoke up and said: 'Don't worry, Mr. Carrington; I might tell you more about that myself than I shall; wait and see.' And as the little clock upon the mantel chimed out the midnight hour a very fair chorus of voices sang a Christmas hymn and so they parted. For several days a large body of Indians had been camped some three or four miles below the park, a few of whom had been in to exchange a friendly greeting, and a night or two previous two or three of them, having obtained some liquor, became troublesome and, indeed, had fired upon the guard in their effort to expel them, but nobody had been hurt and the Major had let it go, thinking it only a drunken, crazy freak which would not be repeated. Christmas Day dawned bright and beautiful, and many of the men had early set off to hunt in the mountains, leaving but a very small number to guard the Post. There had been some talk of a sleigh-ride in the afternoon down to the Ranch, but an incident occurred which changed the plans of all concerned and brought the speculations of Mrs. O'Keefe and some others to an end.

"Toward the middle of the morning there appeared down the valley, far as the eye could reach, a long,

black moving line winding in and out through the curvings of the road and becoming gradually more distinct. Carrington was standing with Mabel near the Major's door admiring the wintry picture outspread before them, and she had just told him that for his audacity the night before in asking for it, she should not give him the present she had intended, and he had begged to be placed on probation till the New Year, when their eyes chanced to rest upon this long, dark, moving mass, filing into the plain below them and form into line, then move slowly forward. There were some two hundred warriors, splendidly mounted—equipped for battle—the sunlight flashing from their rifle-barrels, their gaudy feathers tossing in the wind. Steadily they moved forward, chanting a wild, weird song, while before them one warrior rode from right to left and left to right in wild careering, flourishing a scalp-lock upon a pole and evidently leading in the song. One by one they saw the men slip quickly within their quarters and then reappear. It was a new sight to Carrington. It might mean nothing—it might mean much. To Mabel it meant everything. But the one idea had fastened upon her brain. It was to be but the repetition of Fetterman and the Little Big Horn, and as Carrington turned to go, saying he would find out what it was and come soon to tell her, and noticed the look of terror upon her face, he knew that her fears were not for herself alone. Looking again at the line he saw it halted, and the leader in parley with the officer of the day.

“‘See, Mabel,’ he said; ‘it is nothing—only a Christmas visit; but may not I have this for my Christmas gift?’ And he stooped and kissed her, and Mrs. Wilder from her point of vantage at the window saw, and mutely sent them her blessing.”

“It's the Quartermaster's turn,” suggested Miss Dot

at this moment, while people were glancing about the table as though in search of the next victim.

“Yes, of course,” loudly seconded Mr. Briggs. “Come, Vouchers, something’s got to be done to redeem the Staff since X.’s fizzle.”

The Colonel laughed as he turned to his junior staff officer. “Never you mind what Briggs says, Mr. Quartermaster. The staff can take care of itself.”

“That’s precisely the trouble, Colonel,” shouted the irrepressible Briggs. “What we would like is that the staff should occasionally take care of somebody else.” Whereat there was a burst of laughter. The line is ever ready to applaud a hit at the staff. But the Quartermaster only grinned—and began :

THE QUARTERMASTER’S STORY.

“Shortly before the 55th Cavalry was ordered to Arizona, Captain Sabres had quite an acquisition to his troop in the person of his second lieutenant ; and as he occupies a somewhat prominent position in this narrative, a brief description seems almost unavoidable.

“Imagine ‘Granville de Vigne,’ ‘Sabretasche,’ ‘Curly,’ or any other *beau sabreur* who is ‘Ouida’s’ conception of a cavalryman ; then divest him of his paraphernalia and habiliments, place to his credit the moderate bank account of the average second lieutenant, allow him quarters and emoluments in accordance with his rank, and you will have a fair idea of Lieutenant Evan Tavistock.

“He was of that same immaculate order of being as those sybarites whom I cite, and fancied his environment in every way similar to theirs. One meeting him and conversing on such topics as his antique bronzes, his old

master paintings, his rare china, his thoroughbreds and his traps, would scarcely believe that his sleeping apartment was carpetless and his ivory bedstead a common hospital cot. But such was really the case ; and his exaggerated style and absurd pretention soon made him the laughing stock of the regiment.

“ Nevertheless he was so thoroughly good-hearted and unselfish, bore chaffing so well, and was all in all such a divine, undisguised ass that none could truthfully say they disliked him.

“ Mr. Tavistock had been in Arizona about one month when he was ordered out in pursuit of deserters. He reached Fort Burns—forty miles distant—and there tarried ; sending the sergeant on after the fugitives, because it was such a ‘ blawsted bore ’ to go himself. When he learned that there were three brides and several young women at Burns, he felt greatly annoyed that he had not fetched a few of his trunks. To be sure he had his top-boots with their silver screw spurs, and his visorless cap upon his person ; but his wardrobe consisted of his corduroy breeches and a jacket with huge orange plush shoulder-straps. He felt in a measure relieved when he perceived that his attire was entirely unlike that of the other officers ; it implied distinction, he thought. At the same time he could not fancy it the correct thing in connection with brides, young women and dinner parties. He liked the garrison immensely ; and there he enjoyed himself during the week that his sergeant was taking in Tucson’s places of amusement in quest of the missing troopers.

“ Though it did not take the veterans at Burns long to diagnose Mr. Tavistock’s case, yet by the ladies he was pronounced perfectly charming. In describing to them his surroundings at Fort Davenport, he had used ‘ de

Vigne's 'own words ; and it was not easy for these credulous ones to believe it was all fancy or deception. In taking leave of them, he invited all to eat their Christmas dinner with him at Davenport, promising them wild turkeys and other good things. He even went so far as to tell the belle of the garrison that if she would agree to come, he would run over for her and ' tool her down in his tilbury !'

" Not long after his return to Davenport Lieutenant De Canter had occasion to visit Burns on official business. While there he naturally heard much of 'Tavistock, and learned many details respecting the young man's visit. He was not surprised to hear of the glowing account 'Tavistock had given of Davenport—of his quarters, his horses and his traps—for that was the creature's way. But he really was amazed when he learned of the general invitation to dine with him, which several of the fair ones were anxious to accept. One of them, in fact, came to De Canter and begged him to use his influence with Mrs. Trolls to persuade her to chaperon them.

" De Canter reflected that it might be a capital scheme to let the ladies go over, anticipating a royal dinner with 'Tavistock, he not to know of their advent until too late to provide for them. This would naturally mortify him, and might result in curing him of his absurd conceit. De Canter had little difficulty in persuading Mrs. Trolls to go, and he advised the beauty not to wait for Mr. 'Tavistock and his 'tilbury,' but to come in the regulation army landau, with its mule motive-power.

" De Canter chuckled to himself as he mused on his diplomacy, and the huge joke he had put up on 'Tavistock. But it might have been more huge, had it not been of that common brand—'too good to keep.' He felt that he must have some one to enjoy it with him ; so before

he had been back at Davenport half an hour he had let two others into the secret. These regarded it precisely as he had, so they followed his example and told others; consequently the whole garrison, Tavistock included, knew of the entire plan a whole week before Christmas.

“When it was learned that Tavistock was well informed on the subject, general regret was expressed. De Canter tried to defend his loquacity by saying it would be an utter impossibility for the fellow to give a decent dinner any way; and, as the invited guests were surely coming, the awkwardness of Tavistock's position would be just as great.

“From this date poor Tavistock was made the target for no end of chaff. The fellows went for him unmercifully, asking him if the dinner was to be ‘*a la Russe*’ or ‘How?’ If the turkey was to be stuffed with his old puns in lieu of chestnuts, and if he expected to catch his *menu* card in the draw. These and similar asininities, well calculated to annoy and exasperate, had no effect whatsoever upon Tavistock. In fact he accepted all their chaff pleasantly, and in the most approved Hyde Park fashion.

“There were others in the garrison, however, who were far more exercised as day after day passed and they saw no preparation being made for the promised repast; and they wondered how Tavistock expected to escape from his dilemma. He apparently never gave the matter a thought, but was far from idle. When he finally comprehended that there was on foot a preconcerted scheme to embarrass and make him appear ridiculous, he at once determined to do the best he could in the way of a dinner. And with this resolve buried in his heart and sealed on his lips, he sought the post trader. From this individual he, for a modest stipend, borrowed everything he could

possibly need in the way of china, glasses, knives, forks and spoons. His own trunks furnished the table linen, which was of fine quality, having once graced the table of his great-grandfather. With the assistance of his striker, he had already purloined from vacant quarters several tables—the property of the government—and these, when arranged in line and covered with a handsome cloth, really made a very respectable banquet board. Horseshoe-nails were substituted for nut-picks, just because they smacked of the service; and having quietly and satisfactorily attended to these preliminaries, he detailed a man from his troop to act as *chef*, and ordered the great dinner.

“It was the 25th of December. Tavistock regarded it as a stroke of good fortune that he was officer-of-the-day. The guests, who would shortly arrive, were sufficiently conversant with army matters to know that many duties pertained to this office, and would excuse his frequent absences. Time would thus be given him, to be used to his own advantage. ‘Besides,’ he reflected; ‘I only asked them to dine; not to put up with me.’

“In due time two ambulances from Fort Burns bowled into the garrison. Mrs. Trolls, Mrs. Hinton and four young ladies had accepted the kind invitation of Mr. Tavistock; so had—unasked—Captain Trolls and Mr. Newburg. But these, as well as the entire party, were assured by the officer-of-the-day that he was ‘chawmed no end’ to see them. Then they were spirited away by different inmates of the garrison, better situated to dispose of them, temporarily, than the would-be swell host.

“Tavistock had announced the dinner-hour as six o'clock; and as the appointed time drew near, much speculation was indulged in, especially by the inmates of the garrison, respecting Tavistock's plans. The fact that he

had really provided anything never, for one moment, entered their minds.

“At the proper time the company assembled at Mr. Tavistock's quarters, where he warmly received them. He was arrayed as immaculately as permissible with the office he had that day filled. His quarters had been tidied up a little by McGoon, his striker; that was all. There was an absence of bric-a-brac, *bijouterie*, and in fact of all ornamentation and decoration, which must have struck the visitors as peculiar, when recalling the previous description they had received. But naturally, only such remarks as: ‘Why, how nicely you are fixed!’ ‘How pleasantly you are situated!’ and other similar flatteries were indulged in.

“Some little time ensued, and the garrison guests present were showing symptoms of impatience, when a neighboring door was thrust open and McGoon, in swallow-tail coat and white apron, in stentorian tones shouted: ‘Cum a runnin’!’

“It must be admitted that the words fell like a blow on the ear of the elegant and refined host; but the mirth occasioned by the plebeian announcement soon banished all embarrassment, and, giving his arm to Mrs. Trolls, he passed into the adjoining room, followed by the rest of the company.

“Great, indeed, was the surprise of every one. There stretched a long table, neatly covered with spotless linen, whose purity and fineness was at once remarked upon. The silver knives and forks shone brightly beneath the many lights, and there was nothing to indicate that they were borrowed or plated. The china was a trifle superior—as were also the glasses—to the average Arizona table-furniture; and the centre-piece, towering from its mesquite embankment, was abundantly and tastefully filled

with fruit from the commissary. The whole scene was really quite attractive and alluring.

“After a brief survey of his surroundings, Lieutenant De Canter, who was one of the guests, so far recovered from his amazement as to mentally articulate: ‘I’ll be d——!’ But hope had not quite deserted him; he remembered the promised turkey, and well knowing that one had never been seen in or around Davenport, felt, in a measure, assured. Others of the garrison present were also greatly astonished; but the visitors accepted it all as a matter of course.

“McGoon and Flynn—a brother trooper, who was acting assistant—brought in the soup, which was pronounced faultless. Then Flynn approached the host and asked: ‘Will the loot’unt have the lemmin edd now?’

“‘Er—ah, yes; you howling idiot;’ muttered poor Tavistock; and a moment later, while the company were convulsed with laughter, the well-disguised troopers were filling the glasses with ‘lemmin edd,’ flowing from bottles whose labels were a guarantee of the excellence of their contents.

“All were cheerful; everything was passing off delightfully, and—yes, here comes McGoon with the promised turkey, which he deftly places before the composed host.

“‘Oh, how lovely!’ ‘How awfully nice in you!’ and other similar expressions from the visitors greeted Tavistock, as he recklessly replied:

“‘Told you I’d knock you one over, you know; they’re as thick as cweam awound here.’

“Then came the vegetables—canned to be sure; but who would suspect it, when prepared by a troop *chef* and served in McGoon’s *recherche* style.

“And here comes the ‘rum-pudding,’ as Flynn called it, ‘blazing fer al the woorled loike a bloomin’ shell!’

“So far Tavistock had no reason to feel ashamed of his spread. It is doubtful if another in the garrison could have done better. Many and sincere were the congratulations he received, and one fair guest remarked to him she wished the officers at Burns were half so nice and thoughtful.

“In addition to the astonishment which De Canter experienced, he felt decidedly cheap; his supreme joke had proved no joke at all. He did not enjoy his dinner because his skin did not fit him, as he afterwards expressed it. He felt ill at ease, and, fancying a soupçon of cognac might benefit him, strolled back to the dining-room to help himself; but McGoon—and McGoon in tears—anticipated his wish.

“‘Why, what’s the matter, McGoon?’ he asked, as he tossed off the brandy. ‘Has anything gone wrong with you?’

“‘There’s not a dhry oieye in the throope, loot’unt;’ sobbed the old soldier.

“‘What do you mean?’ asked the thoroughly perplexed subaltern.

“‘The pet’s kilt! murdurhed!’ was the reply.

“‘What pet are you talking about?’ inquired De Canter.

“‘“F” throope’s ’agle to be sure, that we brought al the way frum de Platte! He wus a foine bird, loot’unt, so he was! He’d licked “C” throope’s goat, an’ he picked de oieye ouden “G” cumpany’s tarrier! An’ now he’s murdurhed!’

“‘Is poor old “Grant” dead?’ asked De Canter; showing sympathy for the old veteran, who had worn chevrons before he joined: ‘What killed him?’

“‘That bloomin’ doughboy Loot’unt Thavisstock paid to massacree ’im wid de sthable broom, to be sure. Bad luck to ’im!’

“ ‘Why did Lieutenant Tavistock want “F” company’s eagle killed?’ asked the innocent and unsuspecting officer.

“ ‘To stuff de commissary baskits of them women from Fort Burns ! poor old “Grant” ! He masqueraded, sor, as a wild turkey an’ they et ’im, they did ! jist as pay day’s cuning an’ we was a goin’ to pit ’im wid “K” throopes crower. Boo-hoo ! But it was sport, loot’unt, to see the boys shling belting the doughboy outen the post ! Be Gob, sor, he yelled loike a thayvin’ Arrah-payho !’

“ So Tavistock’s outrageous deception was laid bare, to De Canter at the least ! The old eagle which had been given by the 22d Cavalry in exchange for a lame monkey, and for some time had been recognized as the Sullivan pet of the regiment, had been placed before his guests, who had devoured him, fancying they ate wild turkey shot by their skillful and polite host ! Yes ; and De Canter recollected that he also had eaten of the National bird ! ‘Ugh !’ he remembered now of having detected a peculiar flavor ; but had said nothing lest he might betray his ignorance respecting swell cooking ! And while McGoon drained in silence the unfinished glasses, the disgusted officer strolled away to reflect in solitude. But he was met by Lieutenant Curry, who gave him information which caused him still greater surprise.

“ Curry told him that in an hour or so—after the guests had thoroughly digested their dinner, it was the intention of Tavistock—who fancied they were in the scheme with De Canter—to make a little speech. He would open by thanking them for coming ; he then would apologize for the deficiency in the dinner by stating that he had received no knowledge respecting their coming until he beheld them in the garrison ; that then it was too late to

capture the promised turkey, so he did the next best thing by appropriating a National bird, which, though an old pet in his troop, he regarded as a fit subject to dissect on a National holiday, etc., etc.

“Tavistock was certainly in a position to crow!

“‘The infernal scoundrel!’ exclaimed De Canter, realizing the extent of his host’s depravity, and fully conscious that a portion of old ‘Grant’ was sticking to his ribs; ‘why, it will be a disgrace to the regiment, if not to the corps!’ Then turning to Curry, he said: ‘I can’t thank you enough, old man, for having told me this; I’ll balk the beggar yet!’

“And together they went to Tavistock’s quarters, where the visitors and others were pleasantly conversing. A few moments later De Canter—who had never addressed an assemblage since the time he stood upon the platform and told his schoolmates the thrilling story of the heroic boy and the burning deck—arose and said:

“‘*Ladies and Gentlemen*: I am conscious that it is bad form to trumpet one’s own deeds; but I feel it my duty to inform you of a dastardly plot, of which you were to be the victims; which was frustrated by my interference!’

“(The company express gratitude and surprise, and Tavistock pales.)

“‘It appears that Mr. Tavistock regarded your presence here to-day as part of a scheme to embarrass him. It is only proper for me to add that when he invited you to dine he had no hope of your coming. But he eventually learned you would be here, and satisfied that it was a trick to annoy him, and realizing his inability to provide the promised dish, he sought to turn the tables upon you!

“‘Through the instrumentality of a wretch, who I am

thankful to say is no longer in the garrison, he had the old pet eagle of "F" troop killed and placed before you to pose as his wild turkey !' (Cries of 'The monster !' 'The beast !' and various sounds which show the paucity of orthography.)

" 'Yes, ladies and gentlemen, and it is his belief at this moment that the bully of "F" troop has been devoured by you ! But when I learned of his purpose, I quietly sent the turkey which was to grace my own modest board over to Mr. Tavistock's cook with instructions to prepare it properly for you, and to decently inter the dead champion of "F" troop. From this you will perceive that it was my precaution alone that rescued you from a fate too hideous to contemplate.'

"It seems needless to add that De Canter stock instantly rose in proportion to the decline in Tavistock ; and though the lie told by the former was far too dark to be classed with the 'white' ones, it completely foiled the latter, and prevented sudden and serious illness among the visitors."

"It is time we heard from one of our guests," said the Colonel ; "local talent isn't exhausted, but these fellows, like the poor, we have ever with us. Come, Major Loomis. You told the best story I ever heard, one night when we were camped at Warrenton, in '63 — "

"Yes, yes, Major Loomis," impatiently called a dozen voices.

"But my yarns are all blood-curdlers," said Loomis, gravely. "The story Colonel Grace refers to was of the supernatural nature, and I had happened to be so placed as to have to hear a good deal of that sort of thing some years ago.

"I dote on ghost stories—and Mr. X. was such a sell," pleaded the lady with those effective eyes.

"Tell us one. Tell us anything, Major," came from the table generally.

"Well," said he, "it needs a yarn like one of mine to bring things to a rational temperature after hours of such delight and festivity. List—list—oh, list—

THE MAJOR'S STORY.

"The more we are brought in contact with the known forces of Nature the more we become impressed with the fact that there are subtle influences exerted by them on the human system. Many occurrences which, in this century, we know are the result of contact with these known forces were, in the last century, accorded to ideas generated by superstition. While, therefore, enlightenment throws a mantle over superstition, education seems to have lifted the veil of spiritual matters to such an extent that we no longer attribute to legerdemain the Mesmeric power; but are compelled to admit that there are those who possess in a high degree the power to enslave the human mind, and bend its every action to the vagaries of that power.

"That there are persons who possess the gift of what is known as 'second sight,' we do not for one instant doubt; but what force is exerted upon the mind to produce these glances into unknown mysteries has never yet been discovered. We can only accept facts as they appear.

"Captain Charlie Calverton, formerly of the —th Infantry, was a warm personal friend of mine, and a bachelor, somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty years of age at the time of which I speak. I was visiting him a few years before his death, at Fort Blanco. While at the post

a large dancing party was given, and, of course I, with my host, attended. During one of the dances I was seated near two ladies with whom I, at intervals, conversed. At a lull in the music one of them turned to me and observed—

“ ‘Major, I believe you are one of Captain Calverton's oldest friends?’

“ ‘I admitted the fact, and paid some complimentary tribute to his loyalty.

“ ‘Well,’ said the lady, ‘we have often wondered why he has always remained a bachelor. He seems so deferential to women, and apparently is pleased with their society; he loves music, yet I have never known him to dance; and he has a singular fondness for all kinds of flowers—that is, if I except heliotrope? Perhaps you can solve the riddle for us?’

“ ‘Why do you say that he loves flowers of all kinds except heliotrope?’ I queried.

“ ‘Because he cultivates them whenever he has the opportunity; but amid the endless variety that I have known him to have I have never seen the flower mentioned; and to convince me that I was right in my surmise, I have seen him turn pale at the sight of it. On one occasion he was offered a *boutonniere* of heliotrope by a lady, and his rejection of it was really rude. You may depend upon it he was never tendered another flower by that lady.’

“ ‘I drew my own conclusions as to who the lady was that had been referred to, and therefore, to soften her feelings a little, I told her that the captain had some very painful recollections concerning a sprig of heliotrope.

“ ‘Oh! then he has a history?’ she exclaimed. ‘Do tell us what it is; I'm dying to know.’

“ ‘She didn't look very much like expiring suddenly, so

I excused myself on the ground that the Captain's history was his own, and that I did not feel justified in saying more than I had said. But that night, after the Captain and I had gone to his quarters, and we were quietly enjoying our cigars, I alluded to the conversation, when he approved of what I had done, and at the same time requested me never to allude to his past life in the presence of others while he was alive. A telegram hurried me away the next day, and so I was saved the trouble of refusing the ladies a second time. But the Captain is dead now—gone to investigate mysteries over which we conversed for many an hour. His spirit is often with me. I'm not a spiritualist, either by faith or practice, nor can I account for the mysterious influence which causes me to feel a spiritual presence; but so impressed have I been with that belief that I have reviewed his whole life, and I have, for the first time, resolved to relate his singular history, showing a fatality about matters over which he could exercise no influence.

“There is a period in the life of all children when they begin to doubt the actual existence of the mythical personage known as ‘Santa Claus.’ Forty-five years ago this mysterious giver of all good things was a veritable individual in the minds of children for a longer period than at the present time. Hence it was that Master Charlie Calverton, who had arrived at the sublime age of eight years, had been kept in ignorance as to the identity of the generous patron of Christmas day. This may have been caused by several circumstances, for the largest towns he had, up to this time, seen, were those of the straggling village of Washington City, containing about 40,000 inhabitants, and the shipping port of Alexandria, Va.; and this experience had been confined to a single visit of a few days to each of those places, for his home

was in one of the lower counties of Maryland, bordering on the Potomac River. The facilities for communicating with the outer world were very meagre in character at the time referred to.

“But at this particular period of young Calverton's life he began to have his doubts about Santa Claus, and had learned from a primary geography, in which he was being instructed, that the earth was supposed to be 25,000 miles in circumference. He therefore asked his father one day if there was only one Santa Claus, to which he received a reply in the affirmative. His next question was: ‘Then how can he travel so many miles in one night, and visit so many houses?’

“This was somewhat of a poser for his father, who did not wish to destroy the pleasing fancy of childhood. So Charlie was told that Santa Claus had reindeer as swift as the wind. He had never seen a reindeer, and therefore, trusting to his father's superior knowledge, he made no more inquiries. But as Christmas drew near in this, to him, ever memorable year of 1845, from little remarks that he had overheard among his elders, his doubts returned in full force, and he determined that he would see Santa Claus with his own eyes, even if he had to lie awake all night.

“In order to have a clear understanding of events which took place, it will be necessary to give a description of the home where Master Calverton first saw the light of day, and where he was living at this particular time. The mansion was quite unimposing in character, although somewhat imposing in dimensions. It was a kind of rambling frame structure, the central portion of which, like many other Southern houses, was two stories in height, with portico and large white pillars in front, while the remainder had been built at different periods,

as its succession of occupants had seen proper to erect additional rooms, without symmetry, and with no view to architectural beauty. It was a sharp-roofed building, just affording space enough for several sleeping apartments above, while as many chambers below were allotted for the same purpose. It was in the midst of a square lawn, of rather large dimensions, around which towered great Lombardy poplars, while extensive beds of beautiful flowers of all descriptions cheered the eye with their variegated hues. Some fifty paces from the front row of poplars ran the shallow waters of Silver Creek.

“An immense hall ran through the centre of the house, on the left of which, as you entered, were three rooms, the front being used as a family sitting-room, while that immediately in rear of it was the bed-room of Mr. and Mrs. Calverton. The third was built as an addition on the side, and communicated only with the sitting-room. This latter was occupied as a chamber for Mr. Calverton's two children, Charlie and Joe.

“Christmas eve came. The boys' stockings, as well as those of the parents and the domestics of the house, were, as was customary, fastened to the sitting-room mantel, and the entire family had retired to rest. From the position where Charlie lay, tucked up in the bed-clothes, could be seen the row of stockings, and while awaiting the advent of Santa Claus he counted them over and over again, until it seemed to him there were hundreds of them.

“He had watched the flickering flames make their last leap into the wide-mouthed old chimney—had seen the glowing embers in the fire-place die out one by one, and was thinking he had imposed upon himself a useless task, when, suddenly, the room became illuminated as if by a thousand candles, and as his eyes expanded with aston-

ishment, a human female form rose up as if from beside his bed, and rushed through the open doorway into the sitting-room. Charlie had always been considered a brave little fellow, and though terribly frightened, jumped from his bed, thinking that if Santa Claus came in that manner a wonderful discovery would be made, and he would have the pleasure of relating how he had caught the old fellow in the act. He therefore followed the glaring figure into the room. As he neared the centre he gave one shriek and fell senseless to the floor.

“His piteous cry awakened both father and mother, who hastily sprang from their bed, and while the father was engaged in lighting a lamp, the mother hurried through the dark to the bedside of her children. Finding that Charlie was missing and that Joe was asleep, she returned to the sitting-room just as Mr. Calverton brought the lamp, and there they discovered their senseless boy.

“‘What could it mean?’ ‘What was he doing there?’ These were the questions that father and mother naturally asked each other as they raised their little boy from the floor, and endeavored to resuscitate him. But no reply came from those childish lips. Charlie lay in a death-like swoon, and the pulsations of his heart could scarcely be distinguished. A man-servant was called and dispatched for the doctor, who lived only two miles away. In the meanwhile the mother exhausted all her ingenuity in her applications for restoration. In the course of three-quarters of an hour the doctor arrived, and after having been informed of what had occurred, he commenced his treatment of the case, succeeding so far that in a short while they had the satisfaction of seeing Charlie open his eyes; but upon discovering again a bright light in the room, shuddered as with an ague and quickly closed them, apparently relapsing into his swoon.

“ ‘What is it, my son?’ asked Mrs. Calverton. ‘Mamma is near you—nothing can harm you. Tell me, my boy, what is the matter?’

“After repeating these words several times, while bending over his prostrate form, Charlie again opened his eyes, and throwing his arms about his mother’s neck, exclaimed, ‘Oh, mother.’

“This was all he could say, and the doctor advised that they leave all questioning alone until morning. So the little fellow lay with his arms about his mother’s neck until sleep overcame him, when he was again placed in his bed, while the mother watched beside him during the night. At intervals his little face would warp as with pain and his body tremble from head to foot.

“When he finally awoke, some time after daylight, and was questioned by his mother, he said: ‘I was watching for Santa Claus and thought I had found him, when I discovered it was a lady all on fire, and she uttered such awful cries, and was burning up so, that it scared me nearly to death.’

“Mrs. Calverton tried to convince her son that he had been dreaming—that no one had been on fire and that there was no lady in the house but herself, so that he must be mistaken. But Charlie insisted on it that he was wide awake and saw everything. No one could conjecture what it all meant. The father argued that the boy had been troubled with a bad dream; the mother was not so well satisfied, as she had never known him to walk in his sleep; while the old negro cook said: ‘Dere’s gwine ter be sumpin’ tur’ble happen—Mars’ Charlie’s done got secon’ sight.’ There was one thing certain—Charlie never watched for Santa Claus a second time, nor could he ever be prevailed upon to sleep in the same chamber.

“The sunny days of childhood passed only too quickly,

and when Charlie arrived at the age of fourteen years both boys were sent off to school at Baltimore. At the end of three years Charlie was appointed a cadet at the West Point Military Academy, while Joe continued at school for two years longer, and finally entered college.

“Charlie graduated in due time, and after spending his three months’ furlough at home was assigned to a regiment then doing duty on the Indian frontier. But the winter he spent there was harassing in the extreme, on account of the secession movement, and he was actually glad when war was declared, and he was ordered with his regiment to the East. This gave him the opportunity of paying a visit to his home, although he ran the risk of being captured by the enemy, who occupied the lower Potomac at this time. Mr. Calverton had strong Southern proclivities, but his wife was equally strong in her support of the Union, and thus matters at home were kept upon a neutral basis. The result, however, was that Joe adopted the father’s side of the question, and hastened to join the rebel army; while Charlie, although urged by his father to either go South or stay at home, never for an instant flagged in what he considered his duty to his country. Thus it was that the brothers were arrayed one against the other, while the mother’s heart was torn with anguish at the thought. With bitter upbraiding from his father, and with blessings from his mother, Charlie left home to take his place in the Army of the Potomac, and to participate in the greatest struggle that any nation has ever been called upon to endure.

“During the Antietam campaign he received news of the death of his father, but it was not until the armies were confronting each other before Fredericksburg that he could get away, and then only for a few days, he simply having to cross the Potomac River. His mother

begged him to resign and stay at home ; but he argued that it would be cowardly to do so during hostilities, and a battle in prospect. He assured her, however, that as soon as the war was over he would tender his resignation and devote his life to her.

“ The day before he left for his station he came into the breakfast-room looking pale and haggard, seeing which, his mother inquired if he was ill, or if he had passed a restless night.

“ ‘ I am not ill, mother,’ he replied, ‘ but I have passed a restless night—all in consequence of some peculiar sensations that I had before going to bed. When I retired to my chamber last night, I sat by the window smoking a cigar and watching a few filmy clouds that were passing rapidly over the moon’s face. Suddenly my mind became fixed, as it were, and there opened before my vision a beautiful stretch of country that I had never seen before—a lovely valley between two prominent ridges. All about me were fields of grain, green meadows and ripening orchards. I found myself standing with an army on one of these ridges. Presently a great roar of artillery reached my ears, the clash of arms resounded, and amidst the din we moved forward down the slope and across the beautiful valley. Then a great cloud seemed to envelop everything. But, in a little while, a rift occurred, and while I was watching it I saw father, as plain as I ever saw him in life, stretch forth his hands, and in another moment I saw brother Joe running to meet him with outstretched arms. In an instant he was drawn to father’s breast ; and while they stood with arms locked about each other the rift in the cloud closed and obscured them from view. I called to them several times, and then the cloud broke again ; but this time father and Joe were moving forward, arm-in-arm, with eager expectation on their faces. I

called again, but they paid no attention to me. Suddenly, out of the cloud on the other side of the rift, you appeared, with a most radiant smile on your face, and rushed into father's arms. Then all became black. With the perspiration standing in great beads on my forehead, I recovered from the mysterious spell with which I had become transfixed, and saw that the clouds had gathered in masses, and that the moon was peeping through a rift in them. I tried to convince myself that it was a dream, but it was of no use, and so I lay awake nearly all night.'

" 'It was but a dream, however,' said Mrs. Calverton, 'caused by your watching the clouds. Of course it can mean nothing, my boy. Do you remember what a dream you had about Santa Claus when you were a child? Nothing ever came of that.'

" 'That is true,' Charlie replied ; 'and I trust nothing will ever come of this, but I cannot rid myself of the influence.'

* * * * *

"It was the 2d day of July, 1863. Night had thrown her mantle around the bullet-scarred face of the 'Round-Top,' and over the shell-plowed furrows of the 'Peach-Orchard,' through which the serried columns of both Union and Confederate armies had successively charged that day, leaving the blue and the gray intermingled on the battle-field.

"The last boom of the brazen gun had died away upon the summer air ; the last sharp crack of the rifle had been heard, and the hostile armies that had confronted each other on that fatal field of carnage—Gettysburg—were lying peacefully sleeping, many of their members never to awaken until the reveille of the resurrection arouses them from their slumbers. The wounded lay there, looking up at the bright stars of heaven ; some wishing that

death would end their miseries, and others fondly thinking of their homes, wondering if they would ever see their loved ones again. Mysterious-looking objects in human shape were darting here and there through the Peach-Orchard, flashing every now and then the light of lanterns on the prostrate forms lying there in the starlight. These were the surgeons and their attendants of the Union army seeking out their wounded and having them removed from the field. One of these flashes fell full upon the face of a fine-looking fellow dressed in Confederate gray, and one of the attendants remarked: 'Well, he's a handsome corpse.' The words were no sooner uttered than the individual referred to opened his eyes and asked for a drink of water. Certainly they would give it to him, for no animosities exist between brave men when they are placed *hors de combat*. One of the attendants stooped down and raised the poor fellow's head while another applied the canteen to his lips. After taking a long draught, the wounded man said, as his head was again placed upon the sod: 'Thank you; I can die comfortably now.'

" 'Are you so badly wounded?' asked the doctor.

" 'Mortally,' he replied.

" 'It may not be as you think,' said the doctor, proceeding to examine the wound. But in a few moments he shook his head and said: 'I'm afraid it is all up with you, my boy. You can't live an hour. It would be causing you useless pain to move you. Is there anything you would like me to do for you—any message you would like to send to your people?'

" 'Yes, doctor, thank you; I have a brother in the Union army, and if he can bury me so that my body might be recovered and taken home to Old Maryland—to the old place—I would like him to do that much as

the most he can do for me now. His name is Charlie Calverton, of the Regulars.'

" 'My God!' came in solemn tones out of the darkness, a few yards away; and as the doctor turned to ascertain from whence the sound proceeded, the voice continued:

" 'Doctor, doctor! come this way, please; I am Charlie Calverton!'

"It was but a few moments before the blue and the gray were lying side by side—Charlie with a leg fractured above the knee, and his brother Joe with a mortal wound through the abdomen. Charlie slipped his arm under Joe's head and drew it to his bosom, and there, while the summer breeze whispered a requiem, the two brothers, who, but a few hours before, had been arrayed against each other in mortal combat, breathed a last loving farewell on earth.

"Having placed the brothers together, the doctor left them alone, promising to come back. He then proceeded with his attendants on his dreary rounds. When he returned Joe's spirit had taken its flight. He could not bear to separate them, and therefore the dead and the wounded were taken together from the field to the rear of the Union army, where the final separation had to take place—Charlie being placed in the hospital and Joe buried in a spot that was marked by the doctor.

"The news that reached the old Maryland home from that dreary field, through the press, shriveled the mother's heart with a mighty sorrow, and prostrated her on a bed of sickness, during which time she wrote to an old friend in Baltimore—a Mrs. Meredith—to come to her in this her hour of extreme trial. Mrs. Meredith promptly obeyed the summons of her friend, and took her daughter, Nellie, along. The latter had just returned from com-

pleting her education at Boston, and was glad of the opportunity thus offered for a little country life.

“After the armies had disappeared from the field of Gettysburg, Charlie Calverton was removed to a hospital in Baltimore, and subsequently transferred to the hospital for officers, at Annapolis, from which place he wrote to his mother, giving her an account of the sad affair at Gettysburg, and informing her that as soon as he was able to get about he would obtain a leave of absence and visit home. Upon leaving Gettysburg he gave an accurate description of Joe's grave to an undertaker, and directed the body to be embalmed and expressed to his mother's house, where it arrived in due season, and was interred in the family lot.

“One bright, balmy day in the early part of September found Charlie on crutches at the door of the paternal mansion ; but instead of his mother to greet him, there was a strange lady. Beside her was a picture of youthful loveliness, such as Charlie thought he had never seen before. She was dressed in a costume of simple white, with masses of dark-brown hair forming a coronet to the beautiful face. Lieutenant Charlie Calverton, U. S. A., was from this moment a captured individual. He was warmly welcomed both by Mrs. Meredith and her daughter, and at once conducted to his mother, who was still an invalid and confined to her room.

“After mutual embraces, and many inquiries regarding the death of Joe, Mrs. Calverton observed—‘Now that I have you again, Charlie, you must never leave me ; you must resign, and come home to live. I will not be long on this earth.’

“‘Dearest mother,’ said Charlie, ‘I will stay with you as long as I can possibly do so ; but it is doubtful if my resignation would be accepted at the present time. The

Government is straining every nerve to secure men. See what New York City has had to undergo during the past month on account of the riots produced by the draft. As soon as the war is over I will return home and remain with you all my life.'

" 'Ah, my dear son,' she languidly replied, 'it will all be over with me before the end of the war, and I feel the necessity here of your strong assistance.'

" 'But, mother,' he added, 'you are feeling weak and sick now—you will be better after awhile, and then we will think about what you desire. Until then say no more about the matter; I am here, now, and here I will have to remain until I can get about on my pins again.'

" 'Very well, my dear,' she replied, 'I agree to your proposition. Now give me another kiss, and go to your room and make yourself presentable, for there is a very lovely girl here whom it will be pleasant for you to meet.'

" 'I have met her already, mother, and, do you know, I have fallen desperately in love?'

" 'Indeed!' exclaimed Mrs. Calverton, elevating her eyebrows; and then, as her son passed out of the room, she said to herself, 'I trust it may be mutual;' for, after having seen Nellie gliding about the house like a fairy for the past two months, and heard her joyous ripples of laughter, she could not but think that the charming girl would make her son an excellent wife.

" 'When the family met at dinner that day Nellie Meredith was more charming than ever, and in her beautiful costume of white lace was, to Charlie Calverton's eyes, perfection itself. As they arose from the dinner-table a white rosebud dropped from the flowers fastened on Nellie's bosom, and Charlie quickly picked it up, saying, as he did so, 'May I keep it?'

“ ‘No,’ she replied, adding, ‘it is not worth keeping.’ Then taking a sprig of heliotrope from the other flowers at her bosom, she presented it to him, saying, ‘This is my favorite flower.’

“ Mrs. Meredith remained with Mrs. Calverton for several weeks after Charlie’s arrival, but, as she saw that her friend was steadily improving, she finally took her departure with Nellie—Charlie having, in the meanwhile, availed himself of every opportunity to enjoy the beautiful girl’s society. In fact, he had become deeply in love with her, but had advanced no further in making known that fact to her than obtaining permission to call her Nellie.

“ Thus matters stood in the month of April of the following year, when Charlie felt that it was time for him to report for duty with his regiment, his mother having apparently recovered her health, and his fractured limb no longer giving him trouble. After much opposition on the part of his mother, he proceeded to Baltimore, determined to see Nellie Meredith before he took the field; but at the same time resolved not to make known his love until he could ask her hand in marriage. He therefore stopped at a hotel for a few days, although the Merediths urged him to remain with them, and paid daily visits to Nellie. It was the night before his intended departure from the city, and having bade the family good-bye, Nellie accompanied him to the front door.

“ She stood in the doorway like a framed picture, and in the bright moonlight which flooded the front of the house, her loveliness was plainly to be seen. The form, dainty and small, was set off by an evening dress of pink, of some gauzy material. A fine white Shetland shawl, which should have covered the shoulders and protected them from the dews which were beginning to fall, had

dropped away and exposed to view the exquisitely moulded form. Her face was upturned to the evening sky, in which Charlie discerned an air of wistfulness, almost amounting to longing. The contour of it was delicate; its beauty was of an order rare and peculiar. Large, luminous and star-like were the dark eyes. The complexion was of a clear olive, with just a shade of coloring, which gathered into the deep crimson of her sweet and tender lips. Great masses of dark brown hair were drawn back from the pure and perfect face, and arranged in coils around the head.

“As Charlie stood beside her he feasted his eyes on her loveliness; in a moment he held in his own the dear delicate hand. How tiny it looked, with the dainty ruffles of costly lace almost covering it! His heart beat so quickly that for a moment he could not speak. The subtle, nameless influence of the scene and hour was upon him; he was longing to take the small form into his arms, to press fond, lingering kisses upon the sweet crimson lips. After a minute's silence she turned her great dark eyes, filled with a soft, shy light, to his face.

“The innocent, child-like face, with its exquisite beauty. How strongly, how deeply it moved him! The wild love surging within him would no longer be put aside; it cried out, demanding satisfaction. Ardent, passionate words rose to his lips; it was with difficulty he controlled his emotions as to speak with a semblance of calmness. Holding her little hand tightly in both of his own he said softly, ‘Nellie, I love you.’

“By the faint pale light he could see how the fast-coming blushes dyed the delicate cheeks—how the white lids, with their long heavy fringes, suddenly drooped over the glorious dark eyes.

“‘I have loved you for a long time,’ he said, bending

over the small form ; ' so dearly that I feared to trust myself in your presence, lest by word or look I might betray my love.'

" Still the white lids drooped, and she shrank back a little, where, in the shadow of the doorway, he could not see her face so plainly.

" ' I dreaded lest I should betray my love, and so incur your displeasure,' he continued. ' I feared, too, that your mother might be annoyed if she learned that I had presumed to entammel her daughter just as I was going to the field ; and so I resolved to quit your house to-night and try to conquer my love until such time as I could offer you a home.'

" The little form shrank still farther back amidst the shadowy dimness of the hallway. Charlie followed.

" ' Nellie, it seems as though I had never known, until this evening, the meaning of the word happiness—as if I had never known before how fair was the earth. The flowers seem to have gained new beauty ; even the moonlight seems broader and brighter ; and all because I love you.'

" A great silence reigned around them—he was growing desperate.

" ' Nellie, my love, my darling, can I dare hope that you love me ?'

" But still she did not speak ; and hope, which beat so high in Charlie Calverton's breast, now began to fade away.

" ' My darling,' he pleaded, ' I love you so dearly—give me some hope.'

" But not a word did she utter. Hope died out then. He released her hand with a heavy sigh and turned to go away.

" ' Forgive me,' he said, ' if I have pained you. Per-

haps you may think I presume, even if my mother does not think so?'

"He stood for a moment in the doorway. The moonbeams falling upon his face revealed its deathlike whiteness—its rigid, set expression of bitter pain.

" 'Good-bye, Nellie,' he said; 'I pray that you will forget that I ever presumed upon your kindness.'

"He stepped out on the porch, never looking behind him. Wounded pride and love were making life seem a most undesirable gift to him just then.

"Then there was a rustle of fabrics, a little faint cry of 'Charlie,' and a tiny, trembling hand was laid upon his arm.

"Oh, the change that passed over his face—the joy that flashed into his gray eyes!

" 'Nellie, my love, my darling,' he whispered, as his arm stole about her delicate waist, and he bent over her to catch the faintest whisper from her crimson lips.

" 'I love you, Charlie,' she murmured; 'I have loved you ever since I first met you.'

"He caught her in his arms and held her against his loyal heart—the dainty form he loved so well. He pressed fond, lingering kisses upon the warm lips that were now sealed to his own.

" 'My life, my love, my queen,' he murmured; 'how I love you—oh, how I love you!'

"They stood silently, then, she nestling to his side as though there she had found her home. She was not a grand, dignified woman, this Nellie Meredith; she was simply a clinging, sensitive, innocent girl, with a nature which gave affection and craved the same in return. She loved Charlie Calverton, and the knowledge that he loved her so filled her heart with supreme happiness that her lips refused to speak until despair seized her at the thought of his leaving her.

“ ‘ It may be years yet before the war terminates, Nellie,’ he said ; ‘ but at the end of that time may I claim you for my little wife ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, Charlie, I will wait for you,’ she replied, looking into his eyes and then kissing him fervently. ‘ There,’ she said, ‘ that’s the first kiss I ever gave to any man, and it is to seal my promise.’

“ ‘ God bless and protect you, my own dear love,’ he said, as he bent over her and took a last lingering good-bye kiss. And then he left her with his heart full of gladness—nay, unbounded joy—the remembrance of which consoled him during many a hard march and fiery battle in those uncertain days of ’64, from the Wilderness to Petersburg. At the first opportunity he wrote to Mr. Meredith, telling him of his love for Nellie, and asking her hand in marriage as soon as the war was over. He received a very kind letter in reply, stating that if he and Nellie were of the same mind when that event took place, he himself would interpose no objection.

“ When the army had settled down for the complete investment of Petersburg and the chilly days of winter had come, Charlie Calverton was once more called upon to witness the verification of his singular presentiment, for Mrs. Calverton’s health rapidly declined on the approach of winter, and Charlie had barely time to reach home after receiving the news of her illness, before she passed over to the other shore to meet her husband and Joe.

“ Charlie was now alone in the world—all the family gone. The old Maryland home was too full of sad associations, and therefore leaving it in charge of an overseer, he visited Baltimore and gave full authority to an agent to dispose of the property. It is needless to say that during the two days he was there he spent most of the time

with his charming *fiancée*, and then hurried back to his regiment, to participate in the campaign of 1865.

* * * * *

“At last peace was announced, and one day in the month of May Charlie started for the purpose of making arrangements for his wedding-day ; but upon his arrival in Baltimore he found that the family had gone to Lower Maryland for the summer. Ascertaining their whereabouts, he followed quickly, and upon his arrival was astonished to find that they were living in his old home, which Mr. Meredith had purchased from the agent, and Nellie had purposely kept him in ignorance of the fact, thinking it would be a pleasant surprise. And, indeed, it was intended as such to Nellie herself, for Mr. Meredith had remodeled the house materially and furnished it in modern style, desiring to present it to her on her wedding-day. The first Tuesday in September was, therefore, fixed upon as the day for the happy event, after which they were all to return to Baltimore for the winter ; but when that time came, and Charlie applied for a leave of absence, the authorities declined to grant it, but informed him that he could renew his application after the winter began. It was then decided that the family should remain at the old homestead until after the Christmas holidays, and the wedding take place on Christmas day.

“The holiday season came at last. The rooms formerly occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Calverton and the boys had been decorated and furnished especially for the bride and groom, and Nellie was occupying the boys' bed-chamber already. Charlie had been at the house for several days. Several friends of the family had arrived from Baltimore and were attending to their own affairs. It was Christmas eve. The trousseau had all been prepared, and the dressmaker, who had been summoned for the purpose

from Baltimore, was to see that everything was *en regle*. Nellie concluded that while the others about the house were engaged in their preparations for the festivities she would try on the wedding-dress, under the supervision of her mother.

“Accordingly she arrayed herself in her wedding apparel, and then sent for Charlie to come to the sitting-room and inspect it. Standing in the centre of the old room, he first admired his promised bride at some distance, exclaiming, ‘How beautiful you are!’ and then he gently drew her to his bosom and imprinted a loving kiss on her tender lips, saying, ‘I love you! I love you—oh, so dearly!’

“As he released her from his embrace she stepped to a table that was loaded with flowers, and selecting a sprig of heliotrope therefrom, said:

“‘When we first met, Charlie, I gave you a sprig of my favorite flower; now I give you another, darling, with the full force of all that its emblem implies—my heart’s devotion.’

“He took the flower, kissed her again and again with a lover’s fervency, and then she retired to her room, while he proceeded to pin the sprig of heliotrope to the lappel of his coat. He had barely succeeded in doing this when a scream of anguish, that rang out upon the frosty air like the wail of some tortured victim, reached his ears, and before he could realize from whence the sound proceeded, the bright happy being, who had left him scarcely five minutes before, rushed from her room enveloped in flames from head to foot. The maid had placed the lamp on the floor, the better to see how to unfasten her satin shoes, when, by some movement of hers, it was knocked over, the chimney broken, and the light, filmy drapery took fire. The girl lost her presence of mind and threw

herself on the floor. Mrs. Meredith, who was sitting on the other side of the room, sprang from her chair to render assistance; but Nellie rushed through the doorway to the sitting-room for Charlie. Regardless of himself, he grabbed at the fire until his hair and eyebrows were singed, and his hands and arms burned to blisters, while she, suffocated by the flames, fell dead in the centre of the room, the sickening flames lapping and hissing as they charred the beautiful skin into blackened parchment, at the sight of which Charlie Calverton fell on the floor insensible.

“This is the reason why, twenty years afterwards, he died a bachelor.”

“We must have something to drive away the effect of that. Come! I have it. *Place aux Dames*. And who can bring us back to sunshine better than she who drove me to it?” quoth the Major, a moment later. “Come, fair lady,—it is for you to speak,” and he bowed low to the blue eyes. In an instant the table echoed the appeal. Pleas, objections, resistance—all were in vain. At last the silvery tones of a woman’s voice were alone audible. All others were hushed.

DACRE’S CHRISTMAS GIFT.

I. The Gift.

“Miss Dolly Devereux, aged sixteen, was the most incorrigible pupil in Madame La Pierre’s ‘select school for young ladies.’ There were numerous others who, had it not been for the dark background of Dolly’s naughtiness, against which their minor delinquencies were thrown out white, by contrast, might indeed have been considered intractable; but her matchless depravity completely sur-

passed them all, and placed her on a pedestal quite alone. Who set pins in the kneeling-bench, upon the precise spot where the Reverend Dr. Dean's knees must press, as he prostrated himself in prayer in the school chapel? Who basely stole and secreted Madame's best wig the night she was invited to a grand dinner-party? Who personated a ghost, at the witching midnight hour, and frightened Miss Meeks, the teacher of mathematics, into violent hysterics? Dolly Devereux; and these misdemeanors was Dolly guilty of committing within the limited space of two weeks, so that Madame's long-suffering spirit rose and boiled over to such an extent that Miss Devereux was (as she expressed it) 'rusticated,' and sent home for penitence and reflection before the Christmas holidays began. Patience had ceased to be a virtue, in Madame's opinion, and she had felt that it would be more than she could bear to tolerate the young vandal's presence a day longer than was absolutely necessary beneath her roof. This punishment was received with aggravating cheerfulness by the delinquent, who had not dared hope to leave the establishment for any vacation, however well merited and earned. She had been placed under Madame's care at the mature age of thirteen, or thereabouts, and there she had ever since remained, without once having gladdened the hearts and homes of her relatives and friends. Her mother, after a decorous period of widowhood, had wedded an army officer high in rank, when her only child was twelve years old; and, after a brief period, rendered lurid by the light of that weird child's presence in the newly-formed family-circle, a boarding-school in New York had been selected, and Dolly's young idea had been invited to shoot in a novel and unexplored direction.

“Now her school career was summarily ended (for the

present, at least), and she descended like a bomb-shell upon the hitherto comparatively peaceful household of her step-father, Colonel Everett Poppleton, at Fort Washington, Nebraska.

“It was the 14th of December when she arrived, and by the 18th she rejoiced in the acquaintance of nearly everybody on the post, was intimate with several, had befriended the laundresses, and made pets of the soldier's children. She did not believe in class prejudices in the army or out of it, she remarked nonchalantly to her step-father, having scandalized him by presenting a paper of peanuts to his immaculate and hitherto statuesque orderly beneath his very eyes.

“Colonel, or General Poppleton, as he desired to be called, spent his days in a maze of horrified incredulity, excited by his step-daughter's alarming escapades. Mrs. Poppleton speedily settled into a species of despairing resignation, while those outside, whom Dolly's follies and frolics concerned not, smiled leniently upon her, criticised her good-naturedly, and admired and wondered over her from a distance at which they felt themselves safe. She was, be it understood, a remarkably prepossessing young person in the trifling matter of appearance, with particularly guileless blue eyes, short baby curls of a golden hue, and a smile that could beguile the heart of the veriest cynic. Therefore it was only those unfortunate enough to be tied to her by the bonds of kinship, and thus able to regard her charms from an entirely dispassionate point of view, who found it possible to set Dolly down, once for all, as a being totally obnoxious. Indeed, to General Poppleton's alarm and astonishment, the new and unwelcome addition to his private family bade fair to prove an unexampled favorite with the members of his official family constituting the social life of the post. And in-

variably (*perhaps* it was a mere accident of fate) the young lady selected as her 'most cherished' those persons in the garrison—unhappily numerous—who had been so unfortunate as to come under the commanding officer's ban.

“Lieutenant Oliver Renshaw, for instance, was on 'official terms' only with his colonel; and of course his sister, Mrs. Lansing, was, so far as General Poppleton's family was concerned, also socially 'tabooed.' It was, therefore, to those who had made any attempt at studying Miss Devereux's character, a matter for no surprise, but rather the contrary, that she should select the said Mrs. Lansing as first confidante and friend. Indeed, she went so far as to rave over the last candidate for her affections, in true school-girl fashion, at home as well as abroad. '*Such a beauty!*' she would cry, enthusiastically. 'The very prettiest woman I ever saw, and with such charming manners! Only twenty-five, and yet a widow; quite the most *romantic* thing I ever heard. I only wish *I* were twenty-five and a widow; but I'm afraid there is no such luck in store for *me!*'

“One afternoon she had entered Lieutenant Renshaw's quarters without knocking, and had made herself very much at home by Constance Lansing's side, while the latter busied herself with some fancy work which was to be her brother's Christmas gift. Miss Devereux had sat in silence for a moment, having hopelessly entangled several skeins of 'crewel,' and not being able as yet to think of anything more interesting to do. Suddenly she broke forth in speech. 'I do wish I were an artist, so that I could take your picture as you look now, with the firelight falling on your face and hair. Black is so dreadfully becoming to you, you know, with your beautiful, fair complexion; but it isn't every one who is lucky enough to be a

widow, and have an excuse for wearing mourning, you know.'

"Constance Lansing laughed. She had not cared for her husband, and therefore the tactless words found no sensitive place in her heart. 'My husband died three years ago,' she said, quietly, 'and I no longer wear mourning. But I am fond of black. It suits my fancy as well as my complexion.'

"'Just think!' soliloquized Miss Dolly. 'How nice it was of him to die while you were so young! as long as he *had* to die at all, you see. You don't look much older than I do even now, and I don't think of any reason why it should seem disrespectful if I called you Constance, do you?'

"'Certainly not. Call me so if you like, and if you don't find the name too hard to "come trippingly off your tongue."' I am glad you take enough interest in me to wish to call me by my Christian name.'

"'Oh, *that*, of course. You know very well you are far and away the most interesting person on the post.'

"'Ah, you don't know everybody yet,' corrected Mrs. Lansing, shaking her chestnut head in a provoking way.

"'Why, yes, I do, long ago. At least everybody but that horrid Mr. Dacre, who shuts himself up like a hermit in his dilapidated old quarters at the end of the row, and who is going to be court-martialed next week. Serve him right, too, I dare say.'

"Constance Lansing's face flushed with a redder glow than the firelight had lent it. 'You are mistaken in thinking Mr. Dacre horrid, my dear,' she said. 'And it does *not* serve him right to be court-martialed next week. You shouldn't talk upon subjects you know nothing about.'

"'Hoity-toity!' ejaculated Miss Dolly, with more

force than elegance. 'I *never*, really! But you don't mean to say he isn't a fiend after all? I might have known he was nice, though, just because General—no, *Colonel* Poppleton, I mean, says such hateful things about him every time he gets a chance.'

" 'Your father hated him, I know,' said Constance. 'It is through General Poppleton principally that all his troubles have arisen.'

" 'Don't call him my father!' cried Dolly. 'I'd be ashamed to own him as such; and there is no reason I should, just because mamma happens to have changed a pretty name for an ugly one. But you have quite excited my curiosity, so do tell me what this trouble of Mr. Dacre's is.'

" 'I scarcely know if I ought,' began Constance, doubtfully; but Dolly interrupted her with a peremptory order to 'go on.' 'Well, the beginning of it is quite an old story now,—three years old,' Mrs. Lausing said, retrospectively. 'I remember it was just before I came here, after my husband's death. The whole regiment had newly arrived from Dakota, and Mr. Dacre had been quartermaster at his old post. In collecting property for the sudden move, a few articles were missing, for which he could not account. He knew they would be found afterwards, and he might have been able to account for them even then if he had wished to implicate another officer, but he did not. Of course he was responsible for them, at least according to General Poppleton. Finally, without going so far as to injure the other officer in question, he proved in a way satisfactory to everybody, except those prejudiced against him by his enemies, that the responsibility had passed from his hands, and he would not pay for the alleged missing goods. He said that to do so would be a virtual admission of his care-

lessness or guilt. The story is—but I must not tell you that.'

“ ‘Yes, yes ; I *insist* ! I will know the rest.'

“ ‘The story is, then, that there are certain papers which have been “ pigeon-holed ” by General Poppleton that would throw a good deal of light on the matter, and the blame would be shifted to other shoulders than Mr. Dacre's. But, of course, that can never be proved, though most people believe it ; and, in the mean time, Mr. Dacre's pay has been entirely stopped for the last three years. He has very little to live upon, but has been braving it out, hoping for the vindication which has never come, and probably never will now, as this court-martial—if the charges are proved against him—may very likely end his army career. Poor, poor fellow ! Such a bright, noble life marred and wasted ? ’ The last words she spoke as if to herself, with a strange look of pain upon her fair face that passed unnoticed by self-absorbed Dolly.

“ ‘He really isn't horrid, then ? ’ the latter queried, her head on one side.

“ ‘No.'

“ ‘And not old ? ’

“ ‘About twenty-nine or thirty.'

“ ‘Oh, that is not so *very* old—for a *man*. And is he good-looking ? ’

“ ‘He is called handsome. Here is his photograph you may see, if you like.' And going to her davenport, Constance took from a locked drawer a picture of a young man in uniform,—a young man with rather dark, smiling eyes, black hair, well-cut features, and an expression that was inexplicably fascinating, even beyond its evident candor and intelligence.

“ ‘Dolly examined it critically. ‘I like him,' she finally

announced ; ' and what is more, I am—going—to *call* on him.'

" ' Oh, Dolly, *impossible* ! ' Constance cried.

" ' You will soon find, my dear, that *nothing* is impossible with me. I am going to do it, as he is in arrest and can't come to see me, even if he cared to ; and I am going this very afternoon. So, as it is growing late, I will say *au revoir*, which is about all the French I have brought away from Madame La Pierre's.'

" Constance looked at her young visitor aghast. ' You don't really mean that you will go alone to call on a strange man you never saw before in your life ? Why, your father would never forgive you in the world ! '

" ' Colonel Poppleton can attend to his own affairs, and I will to mine ; but I say, would you like to have me stop in later and tell you how I enjoyed the call ? '

" ' Well, yes, if you are determined to go, and will not take advice. Just for the *curiosity*, you know, I should well enough like to hear what occurred.'

* * * * *

" There were three chairs in the room, all old, with a suspiciously palsied look about their legs, and a depression about their seats which was apt to communicate itself to the minds of those unwary enough to trust themselves to their ' tender mercies.' There was a table covered by an ink-stained red cloth, a bit of carpet which looked like a small oasis in a desert of bare floor, a home-made book-case stored with well-worn volumes, and several good pictures on the walls. There were also plenty of pipes, tobacco-bowls, rifles, shot-guns, swords, stray newspapers and cobwebs, and in the midst of this desolation and confusion sat a young man clad in a uniform very much the worse for wear. But it was the best he had (although it had seen two years of nearly steady

service), and so he had no thought of taking time to change it before receiving the visitor who was unexpectedly announced. It had happened that Mr. Dacre's 'striker' was blacking Mr. Dacre's much-worn boots in the back hall when the knock sounded, and so there was some one to answer the door beside the master of the house. Indeed, the latter might even have invented some pretext for excusing himself had not the visitor followed the 'striker,' who had announced her name, to the door of the front room.

" 'I was so afraid you wouldn't see me, Mr. Dacre, if you just heard my name, and associated it with Colonel Poppleton's, so I thought I would come straight in, and you couldn't help yourself,' said Dolly Devereux's cheerful voice, as Dolly's pretty face appeared in the doorway and lighted up the dismal room.

"Dacre was electrified. It is possible that he had never received a visit from an unchaperoned young lady before, and the effect upon him was flatteringly pronounced.

" 'Aren't you glad to see me?' artlessly inquired Dolly. 'I mean to be very nice to you. I have come on purpose to be nice, and to cheer you up a little, because people, and Mrs. Lansing especially, thought you needed cheering up at Christmas-time.'

" 'Heaven knows I need cheering!' Dacre thought, but he only spoke aloud the last words of the idea taking shape within his mind. 'So Mrs. Lansing sent you to me? That was very kind in her.' And though Dolly was pretty, undeniably bewitching, and dressed like a grown young lady, he looked into her eyes, and knew that at all events she had come to him only as a little girl.

" 'No, she didn't. She said I musn't do anything of

the sort. But she also said "Poor fellow! Such a bright, noble life marred!" and she showed me a photograph she kept locked up in a drawer; so I was interested, and came in spite of her, you see. And I mean to make your Christmas a merrier one than you think possible now. Oh, you don't know what I can do when I just *make up my mind* to it! I suppose'—suddenly—'you quite understand who I am?'

" 'I think so, Miss Devereux. Several people who have been so kind as to come and see me in my prison have spoken of you. And of course I appreciate your goodness in trying to give me a little Christmas cheer.'

" 'And you don't think I can do it?'

" 'You can, if anybody could. But I fear I must wait until after next Wednesday before I can be beguiled into a very hilarious mood, and then the probabilities are, you know, that I shall be less inclined that way than ever before.'

" 'Next Wednesday? Why, what happens then?'

" 'It is the day set for my court. You see, they wanted to give me a little entertainment for Christmas-eve. I supposed you knew, or I would not have bored you by the mention of it, Miss Devereux.'

"Dolly rested her rounded elbow on the ink-stained table, and laid her chin in the hollow of her hand, while she turned a face full of interest and sympathy upon Mr. Dacre.

" 'It's a burning shame to have it Christmas-eve,' she exclaimed, 'when you ought to be thinking of hanging up your stocking. But won't you please tell me just what you are being tried for? Honestly, I don't ask it meaning to be rude.'

"Dacre smiled in genuine amusement. 'Certainly,' he said; 'but I doubt if you can understand. I won't go

into the matter of charges and specifications, of which there are a good many, but tell you simply that I am to be tried for an alleged gross neglect of duty. It is imperative that an officer before leaving the garrison should ask permission of the commanding officer, while the lieutenant must also ask the same of his captain. And one officer of a company must always be on the post. Now, I went to town one evening, and my captain also was absent. A little trouble occurred among the soldiers while we were gone, and there was no officer of the company to attend to it. When we returned, Captain Clowser was called to account by the commanding officer (who, by the way, is a great friend of his), and said that I had never received his permission to leave the post. That I understood perfectly his intention of going away for the evening, and knew that I was expected to remain. I, of course, asserted that I *had* had Captain Clowser's permission to absent myself, and my words were construed as disrespectful to both my superior officers—so that was an additional offence. And thus it stands between us at the present time.'

“‘Dear, dear!’ ejaculated Dolly. ‘How dreadfully it sounds! But, of course, you are not guilty?’

“‘Of course I should be apt to say I was not,’ returned Dacre, beginning to laugh; but, as he met her eyes beaming into his, a flood of sympathy, interest and candid trust, his whole expression altered suddenly. He was silent an instant, facing her, and then he said: ‘No, Miss Devereux, I am *not* guilty of the charges. I am innocent, though I can scarcely hope that you will believe me, and I most assuredly do not expect my judges to believe me next week. I have everything against me—though I ought to have grown used to that in the last three years—and I think I shall be convicted and sen-

tenced. It is my sole streak of luck to be alone in the world and have none to be injured by my fall. I have only fought against fate for the past three years, and perhaps the struggle may as well end now as any time.'

" 'Yes, perhaps it may,' said Dolly, conscious that Dacre had been speaking more to himself than to her; 'but there are different ways of ending things, you know. And oh, what a life I *shall* lead Colonel Poppleton, now I am quite sure of his being the fiend I have thought him all along! He'd better be careful where he sits, steps, lies down, and what he eats and drinks after this, that's all I have to say, for he has got Dolly Devereux upon his track!'

* * * * *

"It was Thursday, the 18th of December, when Miss Devereux paid her first call of condolence to her new protégé, and that call was not, by any means, her last. She, however, was not as general in her attentions towards her various friends in the garrison, and she saw far less of Mrs. Lansing than of old. As she had threatened, she devoted herself strictly to her mission, and the unfortunate General Poppleton's life was rendered a burden to him by salted coffee, sugared soup, mutilated newspapers and slippers internally 'set about with little willful' pins and tacks. She also found time, however, for a very diligent study of army regulations—a book popularly supposed to be either beyond or beneath the appreciation of the fair sex—and might have been seen pondering deeply over the rules set down for the conducting of military courts. Sometimes she frowned, sometimes she smiled, and on one occasion General Poppleton was alarmed, but scarcely surprised, to find her executing sundry eccentric steps and pirouettes, indicative of exultation, all about the library, which once had been so sacredly his own.

"The principal ornament of this library was a large

and very beautiful mahogany desk, which had belonged (before Colonel Poppleton depleted his purse by purchasing it of Sypher) to a celebrated Russian countess. It was curiously carved and shaped to suit an elaborate system of secret drawers ; and this mysterious article of furniture possessed a degree of fascination for Dolly that was positively painful. She became uneasy whenever she saw its proud possessor seated before it, and yet, whenever he was there, she managed to remain present also. One day she had ensconced herself with a book in the bay-window, and the heavy curtains had fallen between her and the twilight of the room within. She had become absorbed in her volume (which, by the way, was a naughty French novel, a remnant of the general's bachelor days, which had become stranded on that topmost of the book-case shelves, where the cream of such literature is generally to be found), and was not aware that any one had entered the room until, hearing a sound, she peeped through the aperture between the curtains, and saw her step-father standing at the fireplace, unconscious of the keen eyes dwelling upon his own.

“For a moment he stood with his hands behind him, in front of the fender, and there was a perturbed expression on his countenance which suggested to Dolly an explosion of the latest of her plots against his peace. What had happened now? she asked herself. Had he found the ammonia in his cologne-bottle? had he learned of the exchange between the ink and mucilage? or had he chanced upon the onions in his best civilian hat? Evidently, however, his emotion proceeded from matter exceeding even these in seriousness ; for, going to the desk, he planted himself before it as if with a set purpose, and *then*—something which Dolly had long been vaguely wishing for took place.

He remained for some time at the desk, and the cuckoo inhabiting the Swiss clock over the mantel had appeared twice, announcing the hour and half-hour, before he rose and left the room. As the portière fell behind his stout form, Dolly laid her book down on the window-seat. Then she waited a moment, with a hand upon the curtain. The front door clanged unmistakably, and Miss Dolly ventured from her hiding-place into the fire-lit gloom of the empty room. She went straight to the desk, and seated herself in the chair lately vacated by the general. 'The first head to the left,' she said, half aloud, putting a plump little finger upon the nose of one in the row of small, carved, grinning faces that ornamented a panel on each side of the mirror set deep within the desk. She pressed firmly, with no result; then again, a trifle to the right, and the mirror swung aside, revealing a set of tiny drawers, one after another of which she hurriedly opened. In the lowest lay several long, folded papers, which Dolly glanced over with a rising color, and beneath them was a torn envelope addressed to General Poppleton, Fort Washington, and marked 'Personal.' Dolly looked curiously at the postmark, which was half gone, and would not have been able to make out the word with the meagre aid of the five connected letters 'Cheye,' had not a sudden recollection flashed into her mind. Oddly enough, she remembered hearing General Poppleton say the day before that he expected Captain Clowser to return from his business trip to Cheyenne in time for Dacre's court. This word, perhaps, then, might be Cheyenne,—and the letter? Yes, there was a letter inside!

“Now Dolly, dark as was the road of depravity which she had cheerfully traveled during the sixteen summers of her active life, had not been in the habit of tampering with the private correspondence even of her few enemies,

and consequently she hesitated before inserting her thumb and finger between the torn edges of the envelope. But she did it at last, though the touch of the paper sent a tingling sensation through every nerve in her venturesome little body. 'I will just glance at the signature, at any rate,' she thought.

" 'Howland Clowser' was the name scrawled along the foot of the second page of note-paper, and just above it were some words which Dolly's eyes fell upon almost—not *quite*—in spite of herself. 'Thanks for your assurance that you will see me through this affair, as you did through that unfortunate one three years ago. I shall stick to the line I adopted at the first, and do not see how Dacre can have the ghost of a chance. We will talk over the matter together before the court meets Wednesday, so that no discrepancies may arise.'

"Dolly's face flushed crimson as she read, or rather as these words forced themselves and their full meaning upon her consciousness; and without an instant's further hesitation she thrust the letter, envelope and bundle of papers into her little pocket, already crowded with girlish and innocent belongings. Then she slid the tell-tale mirror back into its place, and the whole appearance of the desk was as before. Equally deceiving was the expression of the pretty face, which by the time its owner had tied on her hat and sallied forth in the crisp evening air had assumed its wonted mask of youthful rectitude and candor. A very superficial mask it was on this occasion, however, concealing a storm of contending feelings, which vibrated between joy, triumph and remorse.

"The last sensation she had nearly managed to forget by the time she arrived at Dacre's quarters, and stood knocking (with a heart which beat as loudly as her knuckles) at the door. Dacre opened it himself, and

threw away his lighted cigarette when he discovered his visitor's identity.

“ ‘Isn't it rather late for you to be out alone, Miss Devereux?’ he asked, when he had greeted her, and become convinced that it was her fixed intention to go in.

“ ‘Oh, it might be if it were any one but me,’ said Dolly, running before him into the house. ‘Rules that apply to other people don't to me, as by this time you ought to have learned. I have brought the Christmas present I promised you at last.’ Her voice trembled as she spoke, and Dacre instinctively felt that something unusual had occurred, although the lamps were not yet lighted, and he could scarcely see her face.

“ ‘I didn't know you had promised me one,’ said Dacre, smiling; ‘but I am sure I thank you all the same.’

“ ‘I promised *myself* to give it you, at any rate,’ Dolly amended. “ ‘From the first day I saw you I vowed to do it if I could. I should have been glad to spite the colonel, even if it had not been that I liked you so much. I would have done this or anything else—for you. Do you remember what day it is?’

“ ‘Yes,’ returned Dacre, slowly and reflectively, staring through the twilight at the silhouette Dolly's profile formed against the window. ‘Yes; it is the twenty-third.’

“ ‘And to-morrow your court is to begin. Well, my Christmas gift reaches you just in time.’

“ ‘You speak in riddles,’ smiled Dacre, really puzzled by the girl's strange look and manner. ‘But I must light the lamps, and do your gift the justice it deserves.’

“ ‘Dolly waited until the bare room was illumined, and then said, questioningly, ‘Why is it, do you suppose, Mr. Dacre, that people who have done something wicked

don't destroy all evidence against themselves, but keep enough put away secretly to tell the whole history of their crime?'

" 'All that smacks a good deal of the ubiquitous dime-novel,' said Dacre, 'and it is more than I can do to explain it; but I believe it is generally admitted to be the case, queer as it seems. However, that has nothing to do with my Christmas gift, I suppose.'

" 'Judge for yourself,' cried Dolly, with pretended nonchalance, as she handed Dacre a bundle of folded papers and the letter she had replaced in the envelope. For a moment he stood fingering them over in surprised silence; then his whole expression altered strangely, and his face flushed and paled.

" 'What are these papers, and how did you come by them?' he questioned, in a strained, hard voice.

" Dolly became a little frightened, but bravely stood her ground. 'I watched my chance, and when I saw Colonel Poppleton put a letter in a secret drawer of his desk this afternoon, I waited till he was gone, and took it out with the rest of the papers that were there. Then I—then——'

" 'Then what?' very sternly.

" 'I—read them, and saw that, just as I suspected, they referred to you,—to your trouble three years ago, which Constance told me of, and also to this very court,—at least the letter does; and, oh, I was so glad!' She looked up at him half furtively, half appealingly, and was frightened at his face. 'Oh, Mr. Dacre!' she cried, 'don't be hateful to me about it! I can't stand it if you are, after all I have gone through for your sake. Don't scold me, but just think what you are saved from. There are the papers which fix all the responsibility of the loss three years ago upon Captain Clowser, and there is the

letter which can prove to *anybody* your innocence in the case that comes up to-morrow. You will be a free man again ; the burden will be lifted that you have borne and fretted under for so long !’

“ ‘ Good God ! that an innocent-faced child like you should prove such a temptress ! ’ he exclaimed, staring at her with a species of horror growing in his eyes. ‘ Do you expect me to stoop to the basest dishonor in order to vindicate myself in the eyes of my world ? I would rather be dismissed the service to-morrow, with an undying stain attached to my name, than so much as draw that letter from its envelope, or remove the band that holds those papers together. I owe neither of the men you speak of any gratitude, but I would take no advantage of them in the dark. If their honor lay in my hands, I would give it back to them without exposing one stain, and fight my own battle in my own way, stand or fall. ’

“ He had spoken in a loud, excited tone, but his voice dropped as he concluded, and very quietly he laid the papers down on the table. ‘ I ought not have spoken to you so, ’ he said, turning to Dolly again with the expression which had frightened her fading from his eyes, and a strangely soft and pleasant light dawning there instead. ‘ I ought to have remembered your youth and inexperience, and how differently such matters must look to a child like you from what they appear to a man. You meant to serve me. You risked a great deal for me, and—I thank you, but you did not know what you were doing, and it remains with me to think for us both. Take those papers back—I can’t touch them again : they seem to burn me—and put them where you found them. No one shall ever know of your Christmas gift, child, except yourself and me. ’

“ ‘ Oh, Mr. Dacre ! ’ Dolly cried, ‘ you have so disap-

pointed me! I can hardly bear it. To think I have done all this for you, and you will not accept it, but only blame, and—and perhaps *hate* me for it! I wanted so to help you, and now—you must suffer, and I can do nothing for you any more.’ As she spoke bright tears rose and glistened in her eyes, then rolled unrestrained over her cheeks.

“Dacre went to her and took her hand impulsively. ‘Don’t fancy for a moment that I could hate you,’ he said. ‘What I feel for you is as far as possible removed from hate. You have been a very dear little friend to a lonely fellow who has few real friendships to call his own. But I think, when you reflect, you would rather have me suffer than do a wrong, or even voluntarily profit by one already done. And I shall never forget how you have tried to serve me.’

“‘There is yet one more thing I may do,’ murmured Dolly, through her tears.

II. *The Court-Martial.*

As described in a letter from Miss Dolly Devereux to her friend Miss Nettie Ainsworth.

“‘DARLING NETTY,—When I wrote you last I was very low in my mind. I scarcely know how to define my frame now, but there is one thing, at any rate, I can tell you. I don’t see why people are always taking a woman to represent an angel in pictures and stories. I think now it ought to be a man, though, do you know, Netty, men are awfully aggravating at times,—the very best of them? They don’t care if they break a person’s heart! But I must not stop to discuss questions in *philosophy*, as I am sure you are pining to hear the conclusion of the interesting story begun in my last. It couldn’t have been

more romantic if it had been all a *fib* instead of real honest truth, could it? and I believe you will say so, more than ever, when you learn the rest. Well, I wrote you on the twenty-third, the night Mr. Dacre refused to do what I wanted him to, and his court was set for the next day at eleven o'clock. I was desperate. I didn't care what I did. You know I had been reading all about that sort of thing in the army regulations (*such* a stupid book, my dear!), and I was confident there was only one thing for me to do, if I did anything more at all. It was an awful risk, too, and the bare idea of it gave me a feeling like little frizzles up and down my spine, while I didn't even know if Mr. Dacre, with his queer fancies about proprieties, would thank me for it; but I wouldn't stop to think of that. The court-room where he was to be tried was in a big house called the "headquarters building," and the hospital is in the same place. So I made an errand to get some medicine, and then slipped up to the court-room, which I had been in one day with an officer, just to take a peep. It was very early, and no one was there yet, which was just what I wanted, but my heart was beating so I could hardly think. I did what I had come for (what that was I will tell you by and by), and then I had meant to go out and come back again to sit in the room during the trial. Lieutenant Dean had promised to bring me, if I would wear a veil. But, just as I was ready to run, I heard some one outside the door, and I had only time to rush into a closet at the corner of the room without being seen, which would have spoiled it all. There were shelves full of books and papers in the closet, and I had to crouch down under them, which cramped me dreadfully, and, besides, I was afraid I should smother before I could get out. But even *that* would be better than having any one come in upon me

where I was. I was nearly frightened to death, too, on account of spiders and other creeping things I quite knew must be there. My head was high enough to let me peep through the key-hole, luckily, and pretty soon the 'court' began to come in. I wondered what time it was, but the clock was where I could not see it, and nobody even glanced towards it, so they must have felt very certain it was the correct hour to meet. The officers were all in full dress, and appeared quite solemn and grand. I could see Mr. Dacre, and his face was white, but he was perfectly composed, and had a brave look in his eyes that made my heart beat fast. A colonel from another post was president of the court, and I thought he seemed kind and just—so different from Colonel Poppleton and Captain Clowser, who came in as witnesses, and looked (at least, to me, who knew *all*) ready to drop with shame and guiltiness. By the way, I had had the forethought to empty the red pepper-box into the colonel's pocket-handkerchief before leaving home, so that when he came to use it in the court-room he had a really terrible time, and I was afraid they would hear me laughing in the closet; but perhaps they thought it was a mouse. Well, the trial went on, and every word was distinctly audible to me. I felt like applauding, and shouting, "Hear, hear!" when Mr. Dacre plead "not guilty," in a firm voice; and then again I could hardly help running out to choke Colonel Poppleton and Captain Clowser when they told the pack of falsehoods they had skillfully gotten up. Poor Mr. Dacre had no witness on his side at all. His case had to stand on his word alone, and of course that could not amount to much in the eyes of the court against that of his captain and the commanding officer of his post. It was an exciting trial, and the court did not adjourn at lunch-time, but went straight on with

its proceedings. Once the court was "cleared," as they called it, when even the prisoner had to go out, and then the members talked about Mr. Dacre in a perfectly horrid way. No one but the president had a good word to say for him. So, finally, when all was done, and the court was "cleared for deliberation" for the last time, I felt quite prepared for what would come. They took a vote, beginning at the junior member, and every man (even that nice, kind-looking president) said "Guilty," without pausing for a moment's thought. Then they talked awhile, and presently each one wrote out on a piece of paper what in his opinion the sentence ought to be. At last one was decided on, which seemed to please everybody in the court, after they had discussed the fact of the prisoner's having already been in disgrace with the authorities during the last three years. He was to be dismissed the service of the United States, and the cold, cruel words made my blood boil within me when I remembered the uselessness and injustice of it all. But there was still hope, and now was the time to prove the success of what Madame La Pierre would call my *coup d'état*.

"Just as the president finished speaking, a bugle-call blew outside the building. It was a call that every one there knew very well; and at Fort Washington it was always sounded at half-past three. The officers looked surprised to hear it, and those I could see glanced up towards the clock. Then I saw several take out their watches and stare at them.

" " "Mr. President," said one of the elder members, "this clock is much too slow. We have exceeded the hour prescribed for the court, and the proceedings therefore become illegal."

" "The president pulled out his watch and glanced at

it, as though he could not believe the evidence of his own eyes.

“ “ “ ‘This has been done purposely,’ he said, looking so very solemn and angry that I began to tremble and quake. ‘This clock has evidently been set back by some person interested. It could never have so suddenly lost so much time itself.’ ”

“ “ “ ‘That, however, does not alter the fact that this trial will go for nothing, as all action taken after three o’clock, according to the order for the court, becomes illegal,’ replied the other man. “ ‘And no officer can be tried twice upon the same charges.’ ”

“ “ ‘Every one looked exceedingly blank, and I was so happy I forgot the cramps in my limbs that had come from so long sitting still.

“ ‘Just under the president’s nose, on the big table around which they all sat, lay a volume of army regulations. Nobody knew better than I that it was there. He picked it up, almost as though I had mesmerized him into doing it, opened it where a lot of papers were put in as if for a mark—and of course he had to glance at the papers. They had been arranged with the writing outside, so he couldn’t help seeing certain words, if he tried, and he *couldn’t* see immediately to whom they belonged. That moment was the most trying one for me. I clinched my nails into the palms of my hands till they cut me, and the pain was almost a relief. But, oh, Netty! it all came right, and just as I had hoped and prayed, but hardly dared to think it would. When the president had read so far, he was bound to read more, and it was not till after he had learned too much to ignore that he saw the papers were private ones of Colonel Poppleton’s. At least I suppose that must have been the way, for he started so that every one could notice it, and kept on reading, while his

face grew very stern and grim. Presently he said he had just made a discovery that had a grave bearing on the case in hand, and which it became his very painful duty to take action upon. Then he stated what he had found, and even told about the papers relating to the trouble three years ago. Of course it would change matters completely, he went on, and he would be obliged to lay the affair before the reviewing authority. It would be very serious for some persons concerned, but it was fortunate for Mr. Dacre that this had taken place in the nick of time.

“ ‘ Well, that was virtually the end for that day ; and when the members of the court at last left the room, I slipped out of my prison, feeling perfectly happy, but so stiff and cramped I could scarcely crawl. I reached home without being seen, but, much as I longed to, I dared not go to Mr. Dacre with the blissful tidings of what had occurred. I thought it would be better to let him find it out in some other way. I went to Constance, though, that same evening, when I found that I was positively *expiring* for a *confidante*. But, would you believe it? she was just as unsatisfactory as she could be. Instead of hugging and kissing and crying over me, she showed a feeling of jealousy on account of my success. She was evidently very low in her mind when I went to call, and when I told her the news, she would scarcely credit it at first. When she did finally, she turned ghastly pale, and looked ready to faint. And what do you suppose she said? “ And *you* have been able to do all this for him—you, a child, almost a stranger, while I—I have done nothing? ”

“ ‘ I let her see that I was hurt, and couldn't resist the temptation of remarking that, at any rate, *Mr. Dacre* would appreciate what I had done, as he had already in-

formed me he valued my friendship. And do you know, Netty, when he said that, I wonder if he didn't mean *something more*? I am sixteen, you remember, and my dresses are quite to the floor.

“ ‘ Now I must close, and shall add a postscript, with further developments, in a few days.

“ ‘ P.S.—It is too bad I have allowed such an age to go by without finishing my narrative, Netty, but the truth is the times have been so exciting I have not felt able to write satisfactorily. This post has been exactly like a wasp's nest, and at home things have been especially *queer*. I have found out, however, in spite of all the mysteries, that Colonel Poppleton is going to resign, and I shouldn't wonder if Captain Clowser did the same. The inspector-general of the department has been at the house closeted with the colonel several times, and on each occasion the latter would come out after the interview with a smile the reverse of sweet. As for me, I am in awful disgrace, though of course no one knows positively what share I had in the affair; and I am to be sent away to a horrible school somewhere in Boston (the very most rigid in that dreadful strait-laced place) I am informed. I shall sigh for Madame La Pierre's as for the “flesh-pots of Egypt,” I'm afraid. It is now the twenty-fifth of January, and I am expected to be packed off almost any day. I dare say you are wondering at my running on in this fashion without a word of Mr. Dacre and my relations with him. But, oh, Netty! I *cannot* bring myself to write at length on that subject. Boxes and boxes of candy could not make up to me for the disappointment he has caused me to endure. Not that he was unkind, or reproached me for what I had done. Oh, no; when I saw him he thanked me in beautiful words almost as nice as men use in novels, and even kissed my hand as though

I had been a queen. He said, whether or not he approved the action I had taken, and it was too late to speak of that, he felt more grateful than he could ever express. I had given him back something far dearer to him than life—his good name—and now, when by an act of Congress he should be enabled again to draw his pay (thanks to me), he would beg leave to present me with the finest diamond ring he could find at 'Tiffany's, just to remind me continually of the gratitude which his best words would be too poor ever to make me understand.

“ ‘That was all very lovely, of course, but I expected it to be only a preface to something more ; and, would you believe it, Netty ? it *wasn't* that in the least.

“ ‘It is only a month since Christmas, and since he came out of arrest, but he has been at Constance Lansing's every day regularly, and now they are said to be engaged. I am even informed that he has been in love with her ever since they first met, though he would not ask her to marry him on account of his misfortunes ; but *that*, at all events, for my own vanity's sake, I shall try not to believe. I shall endeavor to think he really did care for me, but on account of Colonel Poppleton did not dare “ask for my hand,” as the people say in story-books. And oh, Netty ! he is my *first* love, except Jimmy Allen and Tom Hastings, whom now I *scorn* to take into account. Constance is very friendly of late, and can hardly pet me enough, but I do not care to go to her house as often as I used. And, Netty, I wish you would advise me. If you were in my place would you take his diamond ring.’ ”

The applause of the evening followed this fair lady's gracious effort, and then no man was given the floor until “ Dot,” “ Dora,” “ Miss Grace,” had been appealed to by

every voice at the table. It was only after a world of coaxing that "The Colonel's Daughter" told her tale :

THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER.

"In my class at Vassar there were two girls—cousins, and inseparable companions ; one was very fair, and was the daughter of General Lennox ; the other was a very brilliant brunette, with high cheek bones and small, snapping black eyes. She was the daughter of Colonel Lennox, a younger brother of the General, but her mother was a half-breed Indian. Both girls bore the strange name of Kiamush.

"I spent the Christmas holidays of my Senior year with them, for their parents were in New York at the time, and I learned all the particulars of the strange romance which invested their mothers' lives.

"It seems just like a story, and if the parties were not living I think I would embellish it a little and send it to some magazine. I will tell it now, with the versions I learned from the different members of the family all blended into one, so as to make it a connected tale :

"Many years ago, when the West was a desolate region, with but few settlements, and mainly peopled by the Indians, who were far from friendly towards the whites, Colonel Hartwell's regiment was stationed at one of our distant forts—a place surrounded with the beauties of nature, but in entire exile from any places of importance. He brought his young bride with him—a beautiful girl of eighteen, with blue eyes and a profusion of golden curls—and, as there were only a few other ladies in the camp, she was naturally the belle of the regiment. Her

husband idolized her, and was very proud of the admiration she commanded.

“After two years of absolute happiness, notwithstanding the cold and privations of two severe winters, and several skirmishes with the Indians, in which the Fort had been attacked, the Colonel's wife died, leaving as a legacy to her husband a little, blue-eyed daughter, and the remembrance of her own sweet life.

“She had requested that the baby be called Kiamush, after her Indian servant, whom she had deemed perfectly faithful, and who had lived with her from the day she came to the Fort, and to whose care she must now entrust her little one. The chaplain had christened the child at the bed-side of the dying mother. With her own hands Mrs. Hartwell placed around her little daughter's neck a string of gold beads, which her own mother had put upon her when she was a baby. The chain was so long that it wound twice around the little slender throat.

“The Colonel was so broken down at his wife's death that he was never willing to see the baby, whose very existence he hated. She was wholly left to the care of the Indian nurse, and the people of the regiment almost never saw her. The winters were so cold and the accommodations so poor, that the officers' wives seldom attempted to remain a second winter in the desolate region, but betook themselves to the East before another set in. Several years elapsed, and the Colonel still refused to take any notice of his child, who the nurse always assured him was well and happy.

“After as long as furlough as was allowable it was announced at the Fort one day that the Colonel was about to return, and that he would not come alone. His rooms were arranged, the grim Indian nurse was seen going about looking more severe and stoical than ever, and the

little six-year old child, who had been in such seclusion, was seen at a window or door peeping out, but was always summarily jerked back by her nurse. It was current at the Fort that Colonel Hartwell's daughter was lacking mentally, and therefore had been kept all these years in the background, and many pitied the new bride for the responsibility she must assume.

"In an old lumbering stage plying along the prairie towards the encampment came the Colonel again, bringing a bride to the Fort, which had been much improved the last year or two.

" 'My dear,' he said to his wife, as familiar landmarks showed him that they were not far from their destination, 'I don't know what you can do with Kiamush. I really know nothing personally of my child except that she is well and her nurse says happy.'

" 'Do you mean, Henry,' asked his bride, 'that you willingly have had nothing to do with her? I supposed your regimental duties were what had prevented your seeing more of her.'

" 'I have never held her in my arms or even kissed her since her mother died,' he answered, gloomily. 'And I seldom see her; she is frightfully tanned and does not look like her mother or me. I fear you will have a very hard time with her and that crotchety old nurse.'

" 'Never fear, Henry, I have yet to see the child whose love I couldn't win.'

" 'Or the grown person either,' said the bridegroom, smiling; for a weight was lifted from his shoulders at the thought of such a guardian for his little neglected girl.

"It was late in the afternoon when the stage rumbled up to the hotel which served as post-office and variety store as well. Several of the officers were there to meet

their Colonel and convey him with honor to the barracks, where the few ladies gladly welcomed the new addition to their circle, and with feminine accuracy instantly decided her age, and passed judgment upon her personal appearance.

“Colonel Hartwell did not intend that his wife should go to the nursery that night, but she insisted, though the old nurse grumbled and said that the child was asleep. Mrs. Hartwell, however, gained her point, as she always did, and together the father, who had so long neglected his child, and the new mother, who yearned over the little one, and longed to fill a mother's place to her, stood, candle in hand, beside the little bed.

“Long the Colonel gazed at the round, brown face, for she was apparently very much tanned. Her crop of short, dark hair was so unlike her mother's golden locks.

“‘You see, dear,’ he said, ‘there is no resemblance to her mother; I am afraid she is going to look like me.’

“‘We will hope she will resemble both of her parents in character,’ said the bride, a trifle disappointed perhaps herself.

“The next day after breakfast the little Kiamush was brought to their room to assist at the unpacking and get acquainted. She looked sullen and obstinate, and refused to go to either her father or mother. But it was not to be wondered at, for she had lived six years of pitiful isolation, the nurse always having refused to let her play with the other children at the Fort.

“Mrs. Hartwell coaxed her to come, and held out a gaily-dressed doll and a bright picture-book, but in vain. She then decided to go on quietly with the unpacking and see if, after becoming used to their appearance, the shyness would not wear off.

“On the bureau lay a large silk handkerchief, with a

gay border, and a little coral necklace ; the latter was intended for Kiamush.

“ Thinking that they were not watching her, she crept stealthily towards the coveted articles, looking behind her to see if she were watched. Feeling that she was still unobserved, she proceeded to array herself. The kerchief she put square over her shoulders, knotting the corners in front ; being unable to unclasp the necklace, she twisted it around her wrist. Then seeing some feathers in a box, she tried to arrange them in her short hair, trying the effect in the mirror, and muttering some words in the dialect of the Ojibways, although she could talk English after a fashion.

“ Suddenly she saw that she was watched, and a defiant expression crept over her face. But her new mother said gently : ‘ That necklace is for you, dear, but it is meant to go around your little neck ; let me unclasp it.’

“ Kiamush looked at her distrustfully, but the pleasant smile reassured her, and she stood gently while the chain was arranged.

“ From the box which the Colonel was unpacking he had taken a violin and bow and laid them on the table. The instant his back was turned the child had the bow and tried to bend it into a shape suitable for an ‘ archer bold,’ and looked about, as if seeking for an arrow, but finding none, cast it aside.

“ Finally she took the doll, petted it, and, rocking it to and fro, crooned a little lullaby over it : ‘ Ewa-yea, Ewa-yea.’ She then started for the door, calling her nurse, and evidently eager to show her her treasures.

“ Leaving her safe with her nurse, the Colonel returned to his wife ; ‘ Ida,’ he said, ‘ I have only myself to blame that Ki is so like a little savage.’

“ ‘ Living only with an Indian, it is not to be wondered

at,' she answered ; 'and I can do but little with her until I win her love ; but it shall be won,' she added with energy.

"Weeks elapsed, and Mrs. Hartwell found that her duties as step-mother were more arduous than she had imagined. She at last won the child's love, but yet she would constantly break out in some flagrant act of disobedience. If punished, as oftentimes was necessary, she always planned and executed some act of revenge,—once tearing to pieces an exquisite scarf which Mrs. Hartwell had been embroidering ; another time she threw a bottle of choice perfume out of the window, and unfortunately it fell upon the head of the First Lieutenant, who stood beneath talking to the Colonel.

"They suspected that these tricks were at the direct instigation of the old nurse.

"Kiamush had had absolutely no religious training ; for how could an ignorant Indian woman teach what she did not know herself? Kiamush had only some idea of a Great Spirit, who, she thought, made the tops of the distant forest trees wave to and fro in the wind, and who also sent the fierce thunder-storms. At times it actually seemed as if she possessed no soul ; not merely that it was unawakened, but that there was nothing spiritual to arouse more than we find in any domestic animal. It did not seem possible that the sign of the cross had ever been traced in baptism upon her brow.

"One morning, after they were seated at the breakfast table, she appeared with the curly scalp of her best doll suspended from her waist by a cord ; and at night she insisted upon sleeping on the floor instead of in her bed.

"The Colonel and his wife talked it over that evening, and feeling almost discouraged, they decided that some means must be taken to separate her from the old nurse.

They disliked to turn her away, for the first Mrs. Hartwell had been really attached to her, and the child was also perfectly devoted to her.

“ ‘There is a tradition,’ said the Colonel, ‘that one of my ancestors married an Indian, and heredity is such a strange thing that it may be some of her traits have descended to my child.’

“ ‘Mrs. Hartwell laughed. ‘We might as well believe that in some former existence Ki was an Indian Princess, and that her soul has merely taken to itself another body.’

“ ‘But really,’ said her husband, ‘I was not jesting, for in Colonial times my great-grandfather harbored some Indians during one of the Indian wars, and they vowed that none of their tribe should ever harm a descendant of the Leonards. That part of the story I know is true, but whether he married into the tribe afterwards or not I can’t say.’

“ ‘Her nurse’s influence would account for everything, I think,’ said his practical wife.

“ ‘One day the Colonel called Kiamush to him, and asked to see her string of gold beads ; she promptly held up her little coral necklace.

“ ‘Not that ; your gold beads, I mean,’ he had said.

“ ‘I never had any,’ she replied.

“ ‘The old nurse being questioned, said that she had put them carefully away, as the string was broken, and she feared they might get lost.

“ ‘Christmas-tide was approaching, and every day Mrs. Hartwell took little Kiamush in her lap and told her the old, old story of that glorious night in Bethlehem, trying to incite in her a love for the Holy Child and His teachings. Day after day she talked to her on the blessedness of living a true, pure life, with no secret sins or naughty

deeds to conceal. She told her in simple language of the pain it brought to ourselves, and to our conscience—that little light within us—and, what was still worse, that it grieved the Holy Child and our friends also.

“The stoical old nurse was usually in the room sewing and listened with keen interest, but never betrayed by word what she felt. One day, however, she gave utterance to a deep groan and left the room. The next day she could not be found; then a week elapsed and she did not return. Kiamush mourned her absence, for Christmas was nearly there, and she was to have a tree for the first time, and all the children at the Fort were invited to come; but she felt that it would be incomplete without the one she still loved more than any one else.

“Christmas eve came and Mrs. Hartwell put Ki to bed early, so she had had a good, long sleep before the cavalry trumpet sounded for the extinguishing of the lights. After that she seemed restless, and called her mother several times, saying she had dreamed the Christ-Child was coming. She was much excited and it was long before her mother could again quiet her to sleep. In the morning she awakened with the same exclamation, saying, ‘He has come and brought nursie with Him.’

“At breakfast one of the servants told the Colonel that the old nurse had returned laden with such a roll of blankets that she seemed scarcely able to stagger under it. As the guard knew her he had let her pass.

“After breakfast Kiamush went back to her bed-room for some of the little gifts which had been in her stocking. A loud scream from her brought the Colonel, his wife and others to the spot.

“There on Kiamush’s little bed lay a delicate child with a profusion of tangled hair on its well-shaped head and around its throat a string of gold beads. Crouching

in the corner was the old nurse, thin and haggard, but defiant in expression.

“ ‘What does this mean?’ demanded the Colonel.

“She remained in the same position, obstinate and sullen, and the sternness of the Colonel prevailed nothing. But Mrs. Hartwell went to her, laid her white hand upon her shivering arm and said quietly, but firmly, ‘You must tell me what this means.’ Then with little Ki nestling in her arms she poured forth a rather incoherent story which was similar to Tennyson’s ‘Lady Clare.’

“ ‘Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse,’

Said Lady Clare, ‘that ye speak so wild?’

‘As God’s above,’ said Alice, the nurse,

‘I speak the truth; you are my child.

The old Earl’s daughter died at my breast;

I speak the truth as I live by bread!

I buried her like my own sweet child,

And put my child in her stead.’

“Similar, I say to ‘Lady Clare,’ but with this difference. When the nurse found that the Colonel took no notice of the baby, and that it was frail and likely to die, she had taken advantage of his absence one time to go over the mountain to her people and leave the Colonel’s child to live or die as the Great Spirit should decide; and had brought back her own little motherless grandchild from its forest home; whose mother had died of a broken heart because of the desertion of her white husband.

“She had kept up the deception until hearing Mrs. Hartwell’s teachings to Kiamush, but they had wrought upon her to such a degree that she could bear it no longer. So she had walked miles and miles through the great snow-drifts and brought back the lost child.

“The truth of the story was apparent, for the slumber-

ing child, 'the little Christ-child,' Kiamush called it, was a perfect likeness of its own mother.

"The Colonel saw the same rosebud mouth, the long, dark eyelashes and golden hair, the delicate taper fingers and the small, perfectly-shaped ear, fitting close to the head; and when the noise awakened the real little Kiamush, the lifted eyelids displayed great baby-blue eyes, with a timid, shy little heart looking out of them. Of course she was tanned, and had been sadly neglected as regards personal care, but, nevertheless, Colonel Hartwell recognized his own child, the legacy which his young wife had left him, and which he had despised.

"He was too overcome to decide what would be a fitting punishment for the treacherous nurse; but knowing that his own shameful neglect was the chief cause, he ordered for the present she be put to bed after having some food, and Mrs. Hartwell saw, herself, that she was securely locked in. Then the new child, who seemed much frightened, was put in a warm bath, then dressed in one of her supplanter's white flannel night-gowns, and after drinking a glass of warm milk she fell asleep once more beneath her father's roof.

"The little Indian Kiamush was hardly willing to leave the bedside of the sleeper, but Mrs. Hartwell bore her off to matins, which the Chaplain was to say at eleven.

"The Colonel wished to remain to watch his child lest the old nurse might repent of her repentance and secure her again, and Mrs. Hartwell felt that his thoughts were naturally in the past, and in them she had no share.

"The news of the strange arrival of the Colonel's real child spread like wildfire, and soon every company in the regiment was discussing the wonderful Christmas news.

"After dinner the children all assembled at the Colonel's apartments to see the tree, to which they had been in-

vited. The little stranger from the forest, dressed in one of Ki's little frocks, sat shy and frightened on Mrs. Hartwell's lap, almost too dazed to cry at the strange faces about her, as the officers' wives crowded around, and yet she looked every inch a little lady, for blood will show.

"It had been a strange, eventful Christmas Day, and the Colonel and his wife sat up late that night discussing the future of the two children, same in age and name. Mrs. Hartwell, having become attached to Kiamush in these weeks of teaching her and caring for her, wished to adopt her, but the Colonel was opposed to it, for he felt very bitter at the thought of her having so long supplanted his own child. Still his child could speak no English, and the little half-breed could speak both languages to a certain extent, and therefore would be a great help as an interpreter.

"They felt, however, that they need not decide that night.

"Before midnight a heavy snow-storm set in, and the drifts piled up about the fort, and towards morning the thermometer fell rapidly. The next day it was found that the old nurse was missing, although her door had been locked on the outside, yet she had escaped. Her window was open, and there was a print beneath where the poor, frightened creature had jumped into the snow; and then here and there, off towards the direction of the forest a few struggling footprints, which had not been effaced by the drifts. A search was made, the tracks were followed, and by noon the dead, frozen body was found partially buried beneath a snow-drift. Thus the question of punishment for her, and the question as to retaining the Indian child, were settled by a Higher Power.

“The little Indian was christened by the name she had always borne, ‘Kiamush ;’ and now Mrs. Hartwell found heart and hands more than full with the care of two children so utterly diverse in character.

“The blue-eyed child could not speak her native language, and had had the bringing up of a savage ; the dusky, dark-eyed Kiamush, who bid fair to rival the fabled ‘Minnehaha’ in beauty, could speak the language of both parents, but seemed to have inherited the character of some bold Indian chieftain. No ordinary woman could have filled Mrs. Hartwell’s position ; but love, combined with that gentle firmness which always commands respect, conquered ; and at fourteen no more beautiful or well-behaved children could be found in the camp than ‘Colonel Hartwell’s twins,’ as they were called.

“The little Indian was the mother’s favorite, partly because the Colonel was so fond of his own beautiful child, and partly because she was such an interesting psychological study.

“She seemed to be forced to live more than the dual life of flesh warring against the spirit ; hers seemed to be a quadruple existence. There was the animal life of the Indian and its spiritual superstitions ; ever antagonistic to the mentality and spirituality which she inherited from her white ancestors ; and the education she received never wholly obliterated the diverse influences from her soul. There was at times an uncontrollable desire for the free life of the forest, for hunting, roving and other unfeminine pursuits. But her devotion to the mother of her adoption, and to the child who came to her the first Christmas in her remembrance, never faltered.

“At eighteen they returned from boarding-school to Fort Snelling, where their father was then stationed, and immediately became the belles of the regiment. Lieuten-

ant Lennox and his brother, Captain Albert Lennox, were the favored suitors for the hands of the 'twins.'

"When the Captain asked the brilliant, dark-eyed Kiamush to marry him, she replied proudly, with flashing eyes :

" 'I am not the Colonel's daughter, and I am prouder of my mother's tribe than of my father's ancestry ; but I love you and will follow you, if you are not ashamed of my parentage, but if you are I would scorn your offer.'

"The Captain admired her more than ever after this outburst, for he had been sought after by the fair sex from his cradle upwards, and it completely captivated him to hear a girl say she could scorn an offer of marriage from him.

"The golden-haired daughter of the Colonel, to whose pure mind affectation and insincerity were unknown ideas, and in whose thoughts always lingered a dim remembrance of waving forests and wigwam fires, simply laid her hand in the Lieutenant's and accepted him without asking for 'time to think it over on account of its being so sudden and unexpected.'

"A double wedding soon took place, with all the elegance the Fort could command, and the Colonel and his wife were congratulated on all sides upon the success of their beautiful daughters. And the sisters by adoption became sisters-in-law, but none the less continued to love each other devotedly.

"Their little infant daughters, who came to brighten the regiment, one cold, snowy Christmas season, were each, of course, duly christened Kiamush, and the gold beads were put upon one, and the little coral necklace upon the other.

"In due time they entered Vassar and graduated with honor, and there were no two more brilliant girls in my class than they.

“What career lies before them in the future has not as yet been determined.”

“And now we'll hear from Princeton,” said the Colonel, decisively, with a Jove-like nod of his head towards the Senior Captain. “Collegians are scarce in this crowd——”

“You forget Vassar, Colonel,” promptly interposed Mr. Briggs, with a glance that plainly intimated that he had not forgotten Dot.

“I beg a thousand pardons—I should have said ‘among the men.’ I meant it. Come, Captain, it is your turn,” and a murmur of approbation followed as once more he turned to his staunch supporter—the right of his line in more ways than one.

The Senior Captain twisted his moustache thoughtfully, and began :

THE SENIOR CAPTAIN'S STORY.

“I once attended a Christmas surprise party to which I wasn't invited. If you'll pass the Maraschino I'll tell you about it, for it really was no end of fun to me at any rate. It was at Fort Sage. Most of you know the place. It was Christmas-eve, and there had been the usual Christmas trees and small family gatherings at the married officers' quarters, and a rather stiff egg-nogg at the mess. As I passed the quarters of Colonel Hume a cheery light streaming over the spectral snow seemed to hold out an invitation which I did not care to resist. There was something in the old fellow's dry and bitter humor which flavored his conversation. Did you harbor any illusions or cherish any ideals, he would dispel the one and dethrone the other with a cheer-

ful alacrity which reminded one of the merry hangman in 'Quentin Durward.' Consequently he was much sought by the youngsters whose hearts had been shriveled in passing through the Sahara of West Point. The door was opened by Mrs. Lynch, relict of musician Michael Lynch, who in life had tortured the trombone. Round and comfortable as to figure, with the frosty bloom of a winter apple, she smiled indulgently upon me.

" 'Is the Colonel in yet, Mrs. Lynch?' I asked.

" 'Indade he's not, sor, and it's no sayin' whin he'll be ; but come in and kape out of the cold, sor; ye know where ye'll find the pipes and the 'baccy.'

" I followed her into the Colonel's cosy den, which he dignified by the name of library, and lighting a favorite Powhatan, with a long cane stem, I sank into a deep arm-chair and resigned myself to sensuous content made up of warmth, tobacco and egg-nogg. I was roused from a delightful lethargy by the Colonel stamping the snow off his boots. As he came in, his jolly red face glowing, in his big buffalo coat, was the picture of good humor ; but a second glance showed the hard lines which trouble had graven deeply around his mouth.

'In the gloaming, oh, my darling,' chirped the old gentleman. 'Musing over the coals like a true-hearted bachelor, for which nature cut you out, my boy ; but like many other duffers you knew better than the old lady, and behold the result. You forsake the fatted calf to browse on the husks, and that on Christmas-eve. Come, now'—drawing up a chair beside me, and filling his pipe—'tell the honest truth ; isn't there a flavor about the husks which you don't get in the domestic veal? Marriage, my boy, is a bit of music with lots of variations, but somehow or other you can't arrange them

so that the discords will not be heard. Gad, in old times they used to make hermits out of scamps ; we've improved on that, we reform them by turning them into husbands. I haven't a word to say against love ; it may be silly, but it isn't incurable. Beside, love's a necessary evil ; it was nature's first production, and she ought to have stopped then ; but, like a great many other successful authors, she must try a sequel. She got too many properties on her stage ; tried to make a spectacular drama out of a two-character piece written in the only language which survived the Tower of Babel, with no scenery but the grass under foot and the trees overhead. I liked the original, but didn't care for the sequel. Too much style and gew-gaws.

“ ‘ Marian's married and I sit here
Alone and merry at forty year,
Dipping my nose in the Gascon wine ’—

“ ‘ Speaking of wine, will you have a drink ? ’

“ ‘ Thanks, none for me,’ I replied. ‘ The egg-nogg was decidedly potent.’

“ Silence fell upon us both and the Colonel seemed to be seeking the dead past in the rapidly-fading embers.

“ ‘ So you did have a Marian,’ I ventured, feeling an uncontrollable desire to drop a tentative lead into the unexplored depths of the Colonel's past.

“ ‘ Yes,’ replied the Colonel. And a still longer silence followed.

“ ‘ I believed it all as fondly, as blindly, as besottedly, as the poor dupe who went to sleep a caliph and woke up a pauper. One day my happiness turned all I touched, even the commonest things, to gold : the next the heart I believed priceless proved, at the sight and touch of gold, base metal. I beg her pardon ; she was simply a dutiful

daughter. Her parents said, "My child, a rich man wishes to marry you ; throw that heart away and be a woman." Of course she obeyed them ; that's all there was of it. But what's the use of abusing women ; I haven't found men so much better. Did you know that I had a nephew of whom I grew as fond as I think one man can well be of another. I began to feel that fate had made me some amends in giving me sympathy and good fellowship in exchange for a dream.'

"Here the Colonel stopped. I rather indicated than spoke a single word. 'Dead?'

"'No, worse ; a blackguard, whether alive or dead, I don't know. I did all I could, but he was bound to go to the bad. The last thing I heard of him he had married a pretty girl to spoil her life I suppose. What an infernal muddle it all is.'

"The door slyly opened and the rubicund countenance of Mrs. Lynch diffused a mellow radiance. 'Kurnel, I'm axin' yer pardon for presuming to inthrude, but the good ladies have sint you an ilegant Christmas gift what'll kape you warrm this bitter cold night and they laid a promise on me that I'd show it you before ye wint to bed.'

"'Christmas Carols and coals of fire all in a lump,' I cried ; 'you undeserving sinner, you've been abusing your best friends.'

"'Come along,' he replied, 'let's see what it's like. If it's anything to warm the inner man we'll take a nip.'

"Mrs. Lynch led the way with conscious pride into a cheerful room with a clear fire glowing in the grate and brightly lighted by several wax candles in old-fashioned silver candlesticks evidently to do honor to the gift. There it was, laid across the bed—a rich, bright-colored silk quilted coverlid, and slightly moving in the centre

was something white, which, as we drew near in speechless surprise, revealed a veritable snow-flake, which might have drifted on the winter wind from some far-off fairy land. A closer inspection showed that the snow-flake had a chubby fist crammed into its mouth and was winking contentedly at the firelight, as the Colonel and I stared helplessly from the apparition to one another.

“Mrs. Lynch whispered, ‘Holy Mother of God! it’s an angel came to us this blessed Christmas eve.’ At this critical moment, as if to disclaim such lofty origin, the fist was slowly withdrawn, the eyes disappeared into innumerable puckers and the snow-flake was merged into a mouth which emitted a yell out of all proportion to its size. Mrs. Lynch made a dash for the recreant cherub, but the Colonel seized her roughly by the arm.

“‘Stuff and nonsense! some trick,’ said he. ‘Bridget, have you a hand in this; did you let that thing in the house? Take it away this instant.’

“‘Indade and it’s God’s truth I’m tellin’ you,’ she panted, trying to quiet the vociferous infant. ‘When I left the room to call you there was not a livin’ thing in it savin’ the quilt, which I put on the bed wid me own hands; sorra’s the day that I’d be bringin’ throuble on you, sor, and all that ye’ve done for me and mine.’

“‘Take it away,’ the Colonel repeated helplessly.

“The little fellow, attracted by the buttons, for the Colonel had donned his best blouse in honor of the evening’s festivities, stretched out his chubby little hands with a gurgle of delight. The Colonel’s face softened. It wasn’t in human nature, certainly not in his, to be proof against that base infantile stratagem. ‘I suppose they trained you to do that, you little beggar, before they sent you out to impose upon people—here, take it away.’

“ ‘Where shall I take it, sor?’ whimpered Mrs. Bridget.

“ ‘Anywhere, anywhere ! Give it to the Captain here ; let him take it home to his wife.’

“ ‘You are very generous, but I could not think of depriving you of such a priceless treasure,’ said I. ‘Now if you were to offer me the quilt I might be induced to accept.’

“ ‘You be d—d,’ he retorted, with such hearty emphasis that I realized that any more teasing would imperil the chances of the poor little waif, of whom I had already become a warm partisan.

“ ‘Bridget had, in the mean time, drawn a chair to the fire and, with her new-found treasure in her lap, was rubbing and warming his little feet. She looked up anxiously at the Colonel’s explosion. ‘Only mind the little darlin’ stretchin’ his toes to the fire ; shure, sor, you will kape the poor lamb this night. It wud be bad luck, to say nothin’ of ingratitude to the blessed Christ, to turn one of His little ones away, and it the holy Christmas eve.’

“ ‘What the devil can I do else ?’ snapped the Colonel. ‘Can I put five cents in his hand and tell him to go to the next house ? Here, put him to bed and see that he doesn’t howl.’

“ ‘Howl, is it ? I am only hopin’ ye may have as swate a slape. My respects to ye both, gintlemin, and wishin’ you a Merry Christmas, and ye’ll deserve it, Kurnel, barrin’ your talkin’ of sendin’ the crayture away, and ye’d not turn out a starvin’ dog,’ and the good woman disappeared with a suspicious moisture in her eyes.

“ ‘The spectacle of utter content exhibited by the dire disturber of our peace as he triumphantly rode off on Mrs. Lynch’s shoulder was too much for even the Colonel’s

worrimment, and we both laughed heartily ; but with the closing door he turned to me with an expression of hopeless perplexity. ‘ Nice situation, upon my soul ! When you see the Quartermaster to-morrow, my boy, ask him if he will have a sign painted for my front door, *Foundling Asylum* ! I might as well face the music ; by this time to-morrow the old post gossips will have got the yarn in embellished form.’

“ ‘ Colonel,’ said I, ‘ what is your idea about this ? You do not suspect a trick, do you ? ’

“ ‘ No,’ he said, emphatically ; ‘ not in the way of a joke. We have our fair allowance of fools, but I think not any absolute curs ; beside, what woman would lend a child for such a purpose ? There is no hope of any such solution. Some one was watching Mrs. Lynch through the window and slipped in as soon as she left the room. You see it opens into that short passage with a door leading to the garden. I am afraid it is a Bootles’ baby business, and yet I do not think I have made any enemy sufficiently clever to devise such a revenge.’

“ ‘ More likely,’ I said, ‘ that some one, knowing that you have a woman’s heart under your bear’s hide, has simply put on you the onus of turning out a child that they were unable or unwilling to provide for.’

“ ‘ Yes, possibly some poor devil on the verge of starvation. Well ! I suppose I must keep it until I find its owner.’

“ ‘ Good-night, old man,’ I replied. ‘ I wish you success in your new *rôle*—Japhet in search of a father or mother, you are not particular which. At any rate you have a new interest in life, and I am almost tempted to hope that the mystery may never be cleared up. It would be so delightful to see your acceptance of the duties and responsibilities of matrimony. You are atoning nobly

for the crime of abusing it. Good-night, papa! good-night and a Merry Christmas to the whole family. I'll look in to-morrow morning.' Then I left abruptly, for there were fire-shovels, canes, pokers and umbrellas unpleasantly handy for missile weapons.

"Christmas morning came cold and clear, as it only comes on the great plains; so still that nature seemed to have stopped breathing. Smoke floated up in a tall, vertical column till it blended with the clear blue, and the monotonous outlines of a woodless country assumed purity and beauty veiled in maiden white. As one officer after another emerged, hearty greetings and merry laughter rang upon the frosty air, the only Christmas bells in that distant region. About eleven o'clock I went to Colonel Hume's quarters. Mrs. Lynch, rustling in the stiff dignity of her Christmas gown, opened the door and ushered me at once into the presence of His Majesty, who was enthroned upon the kitchen table, where he could oversee his realm, while his obedient hand-maiden cooked the Colonel's Christmas turkey. In the corner was a branch from one of the few stunted evergreens which grew upon the reservation, set in a tub of sand and ashes and hung with gay-colored glass balls and strings of rock candy. The little fellow was literally smothered in drums and horses and woolly dogs, from the midst of which he crowed delightedly. It was evident that Mrs. Lynch had sacked the sutler's store at an early hour. I am almost ashamed to say how much I was moved at the sight of this little waif brought in from cold and hunger to the warmth and welcome of a motherly heart, and I thought: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these.' Alas! the spirit of unrest and grasping ambition had entered the infantile Paradise. In one of his frantic grabs at a woolly dog, with evident intention of sucking the paint

off, he grasped his own toe, and, utterly unmindful of feasible joys, he devoted every faculty to the task of getting it into his mouth, with the result of rolling over, to the injury of the dog, and at imminent risk of falling off the table. A scream, a frantic rush, and the squirming mass of baby and toe was rescued from its perilous position. After duly praising and patting the prodigy I went in search of the Colonel, pondering much over the diamonds in rough of some natures and the delicacy and poetry inherent in the Irish heart.

“As it was about 12 o'clock, I bent my steps to the mess, for I knew that there was high carnival there. As I entered, bursts of laughter punctuated a story which some one was telling. I found all the mess gathered round the Colonel, and I concluded that he had taken the bull by the horns and was telling the story on himself.

“On the table, in the centre of the room, stood a great bowl of steaming apple-toddy of true Virginia make and flavor, for had not one of the longest-legged sons of the old Dominion that ever bestrode a calvary-horse mingled the ingredients with loving care? On a smaller table at one side stood a glass bowl containing an insinuating and deadly punch, the work of a scion of innumerable Knickerbockers, who brought to this far-off wilderness a flavor of Rockaway and Tuxedo, our swell par-excellence Lieutenant Cortlandt, the adjutant of the post. The Colonel nodded pleasantly to me, and went on with his story: ‘Where was I? oh, yes, I was just at the climax. The old woman dragged us into the bedroom to see the present; and what do you suppose we found?’ here he made the usual dramatic pause.

“‘If the women on the post knew you as well as we do,’ drawled Brokenborough, the tall Virginian, in his

musical vernacular, 'you found a five-gallon jug of good whiskey.'

" 'To tell you the truth,' said the Colonel, 'that was what I rather expected to find, but when we entered the room we were partially blinded by the combined effect of wax candles and the loveliest coverlid you ever laid eyes on.'

" 'Kind that you win at a charity bazar and give it b-back to be p-put up next night,' suggested Cortlandt.

" 'Nothing of the sort,' said the Colonel; 'something that such a graceless scamp as you need never hope to attain. Well, as soon as our eyes became accustomed to this blaze of glory, we noticed something wiggling in the middle of the coverlid, and as I live it was neither more nor less than a real, live, kicking baby.'

" 'Great Scott!' shouted the club in Gilbertian chorus.

" 'I pitched into the old woman, and she swore there was nothing on the bed but the quilt when she left the room to call me in and show me the present, and I do believe that to this moment she thinks it came from above. I ordered her to throw it out of the window, but Bridget and my friend, here the Captain, begged so hard for the kid that I consented to give it a night's lodging.'

" 'You old dog in the manger,' I retorted, 'you felt that it was nothing on earth but poetic justice overtaking you for the way you've abused men whose happiness you envied, and you took your medicine like a little man.'

" 'It's well you did, for I've just come from your quarters, and if anybody on this earth can truly sing "I'm monarch of all I survey," it's that identical kid. Bridget has it seated on the kitchen-table, with the whole contents of the sutler's store spread around it, and a brilliantly-decorated Christmas-tree in the ash can in one corner. She stops basting the turkey to kiss the baby, and I am

afraid you will have under-done turkey and over-done baby for dinner.

“The club laughed with evident enjoyment of the Colonel's discomfiture.

Brokenborough said, ‘If you don't want him, Colonel, you can turn him over to the base-ball club for a mascot.’

‘Give him to me,’ said Courtland ; ‘I'll make a t-tiger of him one of these days.’”

“ ‘Gentlemen, said old Paddy Byrne, the jolliest Irishman in the service, ‘you're treating this event with undue levity. It's a momentous step in the career of my distinguished friend, and there's fine precedents for it. Didn't the Emperor Napoleon, when he was just as good as a bachelor, adopt Prince Eugene? I'm sincerely glad that this Maverick has turned up to occupy a corner in the heart that's intirely too large for the proprietor all by himself. May it grow up to be the prop of his declining years. Gentlemen, we drink the health of Colonel Hume and his adopted son.’

“After this the fun became general and the Colonel was given a respite.

“ ‘Come,’ he said, taking me by the arm, ‘let us go to the house and see if there's any prospect of solving this mystery.’

“When we reached the door, Mrs. Lynch rushed out to meet us. ‘Oh, Kurnel!’ she fairly screamed, ‘I've found her!’

“ ‘The devil you have!’ he replied. ‘Twin sister, I suppose. With your peculiar talent for finding babies, Bridget, the whole family will be here before morning. The fellow who takes rabbits out of his hat was a duffer to you ; how do you manage it?’

“ ‘How you will be talkin’, sor ; I mane the mother, and a fine, dacint woman she is, and she was starvin’, and

she could get a place barrin' that she had the baby, and so ——'

“ ‘ Well, well, come in and finish your story ; it is too cold to be standing outside,’ and he led her to the warmth and comfort of the library. ‘ Now, tell us how you found her, what she has to say for herself, and why she brought it here.’ ”

“ ‘ Well, sor, ye know I’d not be likin’ to lave it long for fear of its hurtin’ itself, but I just stepped across the way to Mrs. Redmond’s to borrow from the cook a little spice for me puddin’. Whin I come back, there was this young woman down on her knees sobbin’ over the baby and smudderin’ it wid kisses, and talkin’ wild like, and callin’ down all the blessin’s of heavin on thim that had tuk pitty on her baby, and threatad it like it was their own.’ ”

“ ‘ I see it all, Bridget ; you need tell me no more. You got up and looked at each other and then fell to hugging the baby.’ ”

“ ‘ Not at all, sor ; I was for orderin’ her out o’ the house, but she stud up on her feet and looked me in the face, and there was somethin’ about her, sor,—not that she was well dressed, but somethin’—you’ll understand, sor,—that told me she had seen better days.’ ”

“ ‘ I would like to see her,’ said the Colonel. ‘ Can’t you get her to come in and tell me her story ?’ ”

“ ‘ I’m afraid, sor, that it’ll frighten her away, and if she goes off in this bither cold weather, she will be dead before mornin’—she’s that wake and miserable.’ ”

“ ‘ Bless my soul !’ exclaimed the Colonel ; ‘ I must go and see her. Go ahead, Bridget ; but I am afraid it is too late ; she must have heard us talking.’ ”

“ ‘ Niver you mind that, sor. I slipped the key in me pocket, whin I came in the house, and she’ll not get out of the window, and she barely able to stand.’ ”

“ The Colonel followed Bridget, but as he approached

I heard a faint scream, and a woman dashed past him, evidently making for the front door. Seeing me, she stopped with the helpless look of a hunted animal, her feet seemed to give way, and she fell into the nearest chair and endeavoring to hide her face. The glimpse I had showed a figure tall and well made, but painfully thin. Her face, when she finally raised it—well, I can't describe a woman, but if any of you have ever seen the Beatrice,—I don't mean the smiling damsel of the copies, who has put on a coquettish turban for a masquerade, but the soul-haunting picture of Guido—that face in which grief has crushed out the beauty—you can fancy what she looked like. The Colonel came in, evidently at his wits' end, but when he saw that face the grand old fellow showed of what stuff he was made. I wish some of the women who think him only a bear could have seen him. He spoke to her as gently as if she had been his own daughter, come home after long and weary wanderings; and as she looked up at him, she seemed to read the true goodness and tenderness of his heart, for she made an effort to rise and speak. But he laid a kind hand upon her, saying, 'Why do you wish to run away from us? We are your friends here. Come, tell me all about yourself, and how you came to be in such trouble. Bridget bring a glass of wine and biscuit,' and wheeling her chair up to the fire, he made her drink the wine; then placing himself beside her, he waited patiently till she had strength to speak.

“ ‘Oh, sir,’ she said, raising her tearful eyes to him, ‘what can I say, to thank you and bless you for your goodness? I had only meant to steal in and give my poor baby one last kiss; but the sight of his happiness, and all that this good woman had done for him, overcame me entirely, for, as you see, I am not very strong.

“ ‘ I had lost my husband, I was without a cent, and I could get no work, burdened with the young child. No one wants a woman with a baby. In my distress, not knowing where to turn, I remembered my mother's words : ‘ If you ever need a friend go to Colonel Hume, tell him frankly whose daughter you are, and though I wronged him bitterly, he loved me as only such men can love, and will cherish no unkindness to the dead.’

“ ‘ Then you are poor Mary's daughter.’ The old Colonel's lip trembled, and he took the poor, thin hand in his and lifted it reverentially to his lips. ‘ My dear,’ he said, ‘ I never loved but one woman, and her daughter cannot want a home or friend while I live—and who was your husband ? ’

“ ‘ I married against my parents' will, and a short time after my father had money troubles, his health gave way, he died and we were left penniless. My mother did not long survive him, and after her death my husband was more and more unfortunate, and in his misery he sought the worst of all consolations ; one thing after another was sold or pawned, until nothing was left. He finally enlisted, and died soon after he got to this post. I have some skill as an artist, and managed to get together enough to come to him when I heard of his illness. He died before I reached here. The rest you know. Can you forgive the mad step I took, and think of me as a woman who had but one ray of hope on earth and blindly followed it ? ’

“ ‘ Your husband enlisted as a private in the —th ; and what was his name ? ’ asked the Colonel.

“ She answered, with evident reluctance : ‘ Arthur Hume.’

“ ‘ Great Heavens ! my unfortunate nephew ! ’

“ ‘ I know how badly you thought of him,’ she pleaded,

‘but indeed he was never unkind to me when he was sober.’

“Poor girl, what a pitiful revelation lay beneath those words !

“ ‘I’ll say nothing hard of him now,’ said the Colonel gently, ‘but I will hope, Marie, that your boy may fill in both of our hearts the place of those we have loved and lost ’

“At this moment Mrs. Lynch re-entered, bearing the baby in her arms. Marie rose and clasped him tightly to her breast.

“ ‘Never more to part, dear little one,’ she said ; ‘we have found some one to love us.’

“ ‘Yes, my dear niece,’ replied the Colonel, ‘this must be your home always.’

“ ‘Oh, uncle, that would be too much of a burden for you, a baby in the house. We will live near you, and I can work.’

“ ‘No, no, my dear,’ said Colonel Hume, stroking the baby’s cheek ; ‘you gave him to me and you cannot take him back. This little child has brought again to me the happy days of youth and love. He has found his way to my old heart, and it shall be his as long as I live. Captain, bring your good wife over this evening, and we will have a happy Christmas, and you shall see how diligently the old bachelor will make up for all the years of happiness he has lost.’ ”

And then, with the “sma’ hours” beginning to grow anything but wee, the tireless party turned on the soldier who sat at the place of honor at the right of the Colonel’s wife. No one could think of going home without a story from his lips. He had told not a few, but each was fresh, new, quainter even than its predecessor, full of the oddest, brightest thoughts and sim-

iles, bubbling over with a humor inexhaustible as the famous spring of Rhenish Prussia, and to the full as cool and sparkling. It was useless for him to beg off. He might have known they would not go without

THE COLONEL'S STORY; OR, ORRIKER'S EARRINGS.

“Probably none of you ever met Lieutenant Orriker? I believe he was before your time.”

“Never heard of him, Colonel.”

This was said by the Assistant Post-Surgeon, in whose direction the Colonel happened to be looking. Then recollecting he was in his first year of service, the Assistant blushed violently and resolved he would not be betrayed into another word no matter what turned up.

“Well, Orriker resigned years ago. He was an old crony of mine, and what I am going to tell you is a bit of genuine history.”

Between ourselves, the incident was entirely of home production, but a modest man talks more freely about his neighbors than himself, so the Colonel took refuge behind a personality only to be found in very old army recollections.

Just here, however, the Colonel's wife, who wore a light scarf upon her shoulders, folded this rather hastily over her head, and the Quartermaster, who knew something of drafts, got up and closed the door behind the madam, for which he was rewarded with a smile that had in it, he thought, as much amusement as thanks. And the Assistant-Surgeon looked grimly on and said to himself, “Ah, ha! she is a bit of a coquette still.”

This little confusion over, the Colonel began:

“It certainly was a singular ornament that attracted

the attention of Lieutenant Orriker as he passed the window—only a pair of earrings—but of such a curious make that another look was inevitable, and then another, until the conviction arose that those earrings were of no common origin or associations.

“The pen that Tennyson uses, or the telescope that Wellington held, may readily be supposed to acquire some subtle atmosphere of their own that could strengthen the poet's or the soldier's eye and help him to visions and combinations beyond ordinary reach ; nor was the savage altogether wrong who desired to dine on his rival's heart in order that he might secure some portion of his rival's courage.

“So in the sparkle of these earrings the Lieutenant seemed to see, as in a magic glass, the graceful forms and draperies of foreign lands moving to strange melodies, and even to him out there on the street came a faint fragrance of incense and spices that belonged rather to Arabian than New England nights.

“In his walk the next morning he suddenly found himself looking into the window as before, but the earrings were gone, and he began to realize what an impression they had made, and how much he wanted them.

“For he had found out that a certain birthday was not far off which called for agreeable notice, and where selection was difficult it was wise to begin early.

“Nothing declared itself that had a tithe of the fascination of those earrings, and apparently he had lost them by his delay.

“A day or two passed, and again the Lieutenant stood at the window, and there they were in the corner, half covered by newer and far more conventional jewelry. The opportunity, so strangely recovered, as the Lieutenant thought, was not to be resisted, and they were secured,

notwithstanding what looked like reluctance on the part of the salesman to let them go.

“The conversation brought out a fear that they would not be likely to suit, ‘they were very old-fashioned,’ etc., etc., and the inference was permitted that they were no part of the stock imported from the metropolis to do credit to modern taste, but a parcel left for disposal that had become necessary, rather than coveted.

“Truly they resembled all choice works of nature or of art in that the longer you looked at them the larger they grew, reaching out into the unlimited and ineffable, as if the matter ordinarily there was only a part of finer existences, ever declaring themselves in wholes more and more complete.

“We have been told, on very good authority, to go to the ant, learn of her and be wise, wisdom evidently pertaining to the female in case of this particular insect. But the ant lays up a good deal she does not need, and men are just as foolish.

“The earrings had been gained, the birthday came, but love’s young dream had dissolved and left no use for the trinket, which catastrophe belongeth not to this story.

“Suffice it to say that the earrings were temporarily loaned to a sympathizing cousin, who was to take care of them till wanted, if, in the future, another vision should materialize and remain constant long enough for a birthday to put in an appearance.”

Here the Colonel’s wife filled up his glass as a delicate intimation that he was getting too morose for a mixed audience.

“Thank you, my dear,” said the Colonel; “I was a little melancholy, thinking of poor Orriker.” Then the Colonel went on: “Coming home from church one day, Cousin Cornelia, to her horror, discovered that one ear-

ring was missing. Oh, it was in the bonnet—it may be on the table—it might have been dropped in the hall—it could have fallen by the steps—it must be in the pew—certainly.

“But the search, notwithstanding its thoroughness deserved success, was unavailing, which was quite vexatious, for Cousin Orriker really seemed in a fair way to find further use for his investment.

“When told of the loss, he determined to recover the earring, being one of those men who only get interested in impossibilities, he hunted sidewalk, street and aisle, the search becoming occupation for any odd moment left over from guard-mounting and drill, which, in those days, as later, formed the whole duty of the subaltern.

“But the earring remained a mystery, like the tomb of Moses, till some time afterwards the Lieutenant found himself on the ferry-boat, thinking of the Seminole war and looking at a lady. Although she was not exactly opposite him, yet his eye traveled back to her with a pertinacity that was annoying, and not to be accounted for by anything peculiar in ribbons or complexion, when at last he actually caught a glimpse of the earring upon her bosom.

“It was a delicate matter to pursue, and he was reduced to such investigation as he could make in a tour of the cabin, up and down, with his discovery as the objective-point.

“Sure enough, there it was,—a gold sphere, swinging in a crescent, with a tiny gold star as pendant, and the curious inlaid arabesque along both crescent and sphere, dotted with ruby and diamond-dust.

“But it was mounted as the head of a shawl-pin, and that, apparently, was its original shape.

“Orriker determined to locate the bearer, but she went to the railway-rooms and passed the gate at once to the cars.

“The Lieutenant gallantly cut his military duties for that afternoon, bought a ticket, as soon as he could, for the nearest outside station on a venture. He was barely in time for a train which he searched closely without flushing his game, and upon inquiry learned that an ‘express’ preceded the ‘local’ by a minute or so, making its first stop too far out to admit of further pursuit.

“He had the pleasure of a wait-over at East Essex three hours or so for the down train, and did not improve the opportunity by any exhaustive study of the advertisement-boards, like the traveler way-bound at Didcot Junction, who, it will be remembered, became so interested in the etymological possibilities of Edward Chapman Allington, and developed therefrom a long chronicle of English history, as my audience under like circumstances are earnestly advised to do.

“The Lieutenant had some trouble in making his peace with the post commander, to whom he had been reported absent, and who, he felt, was too old a soldier to take any stock in argonaut expeditions in these days of schedules and clocks and subsidy steamers. He concluded to take the matter up logically. His adventure began with the 1 P.M. ferry-boat. The lady evidently was traveling on a season ticket; a reason for taking the 2 P.M. train on one Wednesday might hold good for another. He would be on hand accordingly.

“So he was often, and with no reward. Looking up, however, from a brown study at a sudden stop of the street-car one morning, there, right beside him, he saw again the sparkle of the earring.

“At least so it seemed. Sphere, crescent, star, scroll and all were visible enough, but unfortunately on the bosom of a very different woman. He had made no catalogue of the features of the first, but certainly she was a Saxon, while his present neighbor as certainly belonged to the order of the olive. It seemed useless to follow up the clue. There must be many individual ornaments of the same type and he had the proof of it before him.

“So the Lieutenant took himself to the oldest jewelry establishment within his reach, left the odd earring to be made into a charm for his watch-chain and encouraged conversation on the subject. Mr. Goldsmith examined the specimen closely and became very much interested in it, pronounced it unique and said nothing of the sort had been on the market within his recollection ; that, in fact, it was totally opposed to current styles and properly belonged, not to a modern ear, but to the — Museum.

“In this conclusion the Lieutenant recognized the trade-mark and resolved to get back his earring if it took him to Africa. He would put the quest on as high a footing as the San Grael itself and prosecute it in singleness of heart without a thought of tactics, Tampa Bay or trial by court-martial.

“Every Wednesday afternoon found him at the depot with a fixed purpose to follow, though

“ ‘ His path was rugged and sore,
Through tangled juniper, beds of reeds,
Through many a fen where the serpent feeds,
And man never trod before.’ ”

“But it was a waste of time. His ticket for East Essex, good until used, was as unprofitable an investment as Lamon's ‘Life of Lincoln’ or the ‘Military Encyclopedia.’

“It came to pass, however, that the Lieutenant, in walking up Willington Street some days afterwards, met an open gate which he kicked to rather unceremoniously just as an elderly lady appeared on the steps beyond and started down the walk. She seemed quite feeble, and the Lieutenant, afraid that, in his violence, he had thrust the gate over its natural limit, pulled it back again with considerable trouble. He had not, therefore, noticed that meantime she had been joined by a much younger person until, as they passed out together, suddenly the shawl-pin flashed into view in the dress of the latter, but assuredly under a face that he had never yet seen.

“Now some faces grow upon you like the contents of a walnut, which are the reward only of the most searching examination. And some faces show all they have at once, like a bunch of grapes, and some resemble persimmons, that are never sweet until after a touch of frost, and give as little promise in the beginning of the result as a California nugget offers of one of Cellini's medallions.

“Orriker was getting to be quite a connoisseur in physiognomy, and his interest in the shawl-pin was almost eclipsed by his sudden wonder who could own those eyes,

“‘Darker than the depth
Of water stilled at even.’

“This appearance, too, of no less than three shawl-pins, all of them composed apparently of the lost ear-ring, could only suggest to the baffled Lieutenant uneasy suspicions of monomania. Was it not really getting to be the case that he was projecting an ideal object of search into an objective existence upon the bosom of every lady that he met?

“Not a little stunned by this last encounter and revolving the problem of entire ownership of his wits, he

had gone some distance before he recollected that it might be useful to mark down the locality of this last surprise.

“He turned back and was confronted by a new puzzle. There were no less than three houses all with like fronts, like paths and like gates on the same side of the street, and Lieutenant Orriker, more than ever convinced that for him all roads were leading to Bloomingdale, went home to get among friends and prepare for the worst.

“By a night's sleep he was greatly refreshed and a thorough wiggling he received from his captain for failure to sign up the clothing-book gave him much comfort. He was enabled to orient himself and get a sure hold upon his identity.

“He proceeded to distribute a score or so of autographs over the company records with as much self-reliance as ‘Charles Carroll of Carrollton’ felt when he signed an earlier and quite as valuable a document. Satisfied then that life was not an illusion nor his sanity a dream in spite of the three shawl-pins, he went into the necessary inquiries as to the occupants of Willington Street, but only to be persuaded that the two ladies he had met bore no relation to any of the houses in question except that of visitors.

“Nothing that answered his description of the pair could be developed as properly belonging to that neighborhood. Perhaps he was too oblivious of the fact that beauty, like the prophets, is without honor in its own country, and that everybody makes for himself his rainbows, and *beaux yeux* as well.

“But during the campaign he one day stepped into the local Dorlan's to get something to eat. Looking about in the unpleasant quarter-of-an-hour that preludes the composition of your order, he suddenly lost all appetite in the endeavor to comprehend that but a few feet from him

were seated all three of the Graces. The longer he looked the more certain he was, not only of the passenger on the ferry-boat, but also of his neighbor in the street-car, and, above all, the angel by the gate.

“ Here they were seated at the same table, finishing their lunch, but apparently in no hurry. Devoutly did the Lieutenant pray for haste in his own case, and delay in theirs, like the parishioners on opposite sides of the county who wanted rain and dry weather in the same week.

“ Finally they gathered up their gloves and wrappings and a few minor parcels, and it then became evident that one thing was lacking—truly the key to the whole position. Nowhere was visible the shawl-pin—not a trace of it on the person of any of the three.

“ Nevertheless, he was sure of the faces, and as they got up to go, the Lieutenant bolted from the premises and awaited them at the curb.

“ Just then the waiter appeared with an anxious face, somewhat relieved at sight of his customer, who was doing considerable thinking to the minute.

“ His first impulse was to toss the boy a dollar under plea of a forgotten engagement. But in that view of the case it was impossible to wait upon the convenience of the ladies, who were leisurely talking to one another, as those who had the whole day before them.

“ Orriker nodded to John, and said : ‘ All right, I’ll be there in a moment ;’ but John seemed suspicious, and remained on guard ready for emergencies. The situation was getting to be noticeable and had to be terminated. Clearly he had no warrant for introducing himself. American etiquette, though without its Brummell or court-guide, does not permit a gentleman to accost a group of girls, simply because of

“ ‘ Eyes that do mislead the morn,’

or inferences based upon the supposed possession of curious jewelry.

“The ladies passed out of sight round the corner, and the Lieutenant went back to his chops and tomato sauce.

“Making his way to the table previously occupied by the three fair strangers, and, astonished to find that instead of marble, it was the plainest of pine, now they had gone, he saw on one of the chairs a small parcel, which he picked up and again rushed to the street, while the waiter, turning in time to see this second hegira, followed him with a frantic ‘Hold on, there!’ that brought matters to a crisis.

“To make a first appearance in the highest circles of society as a fugitive from culinary complications, enforced by an irate youth in a white apron, was not to be endured.

“The Lieutenant pocketed for the present both parcel and affront, brought back to his lunch the absent air of a man much pre-occupied by business engagements, hung up his hat with great deliberation and enlarged his order to include a dessert and a pint of champagne, in order that the establishment might be properly impressed with the ways usual to him when he had time to spare.

“In fact he devoted the next hour in toying with his meat and sipping the cider. Then he handed the waiter a three-dollar bill, ignored the change as proof that he owned more money than he knew what to do with, and departed, having only succeeded in convincing the proprietor of this particular resort that he was a man to be kept under the closest observation hereafter.

“Meanwhile the ladies had resumed their shopping. As a matter of course, a soda-water fountain came in their way, and there being an hour still to wait, they decided to spend it in a photograph-gallery, so reaching the railroad-station just in time for the 4 o'clock express.

“But now the loss of the parcel was first discovered, with mutual exclamations of surprise and alarm. Each was sure the other had it, and there was the familiar search of pockets and reticules. ‘Oh! here it is!—no—I remember now—this is it—where can it be?’

“Train or parcel, which? The result was, apparently, a change of programme—Miss Louise to go to the gallery, Miss Mary to the soda-water man, and Miss Jane to the store, all to meet at the lunch-rooms, as they all duly did, with no success.

“After a brief discussion the proprietor and his assistant, recollecting all that happened, declared their belief that the young fellow with the three-dollar bill and the new moustache was responsible for the trouble, on the satisfactory ground that if two odd things occur in the course of an hour, one must be the cause of the other.

“Now follows a strange thing. Lieutenant Orriker had been looking for an earring, and in a few days had found at least three; but here were six people hunting one another: the waiter and Dorlon after the young fellow with the new moustache; the ladies carefully scrutinizing every wearer of that appendage, and Orriker himself patiently devoting his leisure to the pursuit of the pretty girl with the blue eyes, the beautiful girl with the black eyes and that rare epitome of everything lovely, with eyes that beggared Solomon's Song, deeper than the speculations of Plato, darker than the iambics of Lycophron, sweeter than the strains of the great god Pan, when

“ ‘The sun on the hill forgot to die
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river,’

and all in vain.

“The Lieutenant had visited the railway station,

coming, of course, by one door as the girls left by the other. Soda water and photographs were peculiarities of feminine interest that had so far escaped his analysis, and as for the lunch-rooms, he was creditably fighting the doubt whether he could ever redeem his self-respect without cuffing that waiter into some appreciation of what a United States Army officer really was.

“But the astonishment of the Lieutenant may be imagined when, on opening the parcel, he found—the shawl-pin itself!

“It was, in every particular, the duplicate of the earring now swinging upon his watch-chain, and had evidently been modified from its original purpose to use as a pin, with slight additions, that had recently undergone repair.

“The box into which it had been put bore no name, nor was there any trace of ownership upon the wrapper save a delicate reminiscence of wild-flowers that subsequently became very familiar to Lieutenant Orriker.”

It was at this stage of the story that the Adjutant winked at the Quartermaster's wife, who filliped back a crumb of bread with such accuracy that it knocked off the Assistant-Surgeon's eye-glasses, which he duly remembered in the very next prescription he compounded for that persistent invalid.

“The discussion over the loss of the parcel,” continued the Colonel, “grew very interesting. Miss Mary was confident she had left it on the soda-water counter. Miss Louise recollected seeing it at the photograph gallery, and Miss Jane knew for a certainty that it was at one time lying by a box of ribbons on the end desk of the store. In fact, Miss Jane as often as once a week thereafter made sly visits to the suspected spot, and glared suspiciously at the pale maiden with tan-colored braids

who was in charge, but no scarf-pin ever came into view.

“It might be as well to state that Miss Jane lived in town. Miss Louise resided some distance out on the Manchester and Essex Railroad, at Palafox Park, while Miss Mary belonged to our side of the Potomac, but was visiting now with one and now with another cousin, including Miss Jane and Louise, and I don't know how many more, for if, with the limited facilities afforded by devotion to business in the North, a Tremont Street man might walk from Boston to Sacramento without finding a relative on the road, a Roanoaker, as the result of the leisure and mint-juleps of the Old Dominion, could take a trip to the Gulf and claim kin on every plantation he crossed.

“Sure enough, Lieutenant Orriker had found the earring, but no peace of mind came with it. What is sought for ceases to please when secured. But it was those wonderful eyes that turned night into day and made a harvest moon as dull as a Sunday-school library or an afternoon in Alexandria.

“It so happened that shortly after these events an invitation from an adjoining town was extended to the troops at the station of the Lieutenant, to participate in the ceremonies of Inauguration Day, and he himself was included in the detail assigned to this amusement.

“Beside the ride, it involved some marching and a dinner, as well as opportunity for a ball that was an irregular appendix to the main affair, out of deference to the instincts of the rural elector, who drew the line at quadrilles and the waltz, of which he knew little, so as to include negro minstrels, and an occasional circus, where he felt more at home.

“No wine was on the table—another evidence of the brotherly consideration that regulates the general appetite

by individual prejudice, or, in view of the 'moral vote,' sips its champagne in the closet and shuts off the beer on the street.

"Under these circumstances, the inauguration festivities were not especially attractive to the military mind, but were patiently gone through with, like official boards and tooth-pulling, as part of the discipline of life.

"The chairman of the committee in charge of this particular celebration was, however, something of a soldier himself. His grandfather had served in the old French war, and the present Major Moody felt the drum and fife throbbing in his own blood, and practiced the manual of arms up in the ancestral garret, as laid down in the tactics of 1812-15, having first carefully locked the door to prevent any intrusion upon this unhallowed sport.

"He was determined that the army folks who stayed to dinner should understand that he had outgrown local superstitions, and was posted upon all professional amenities; so, at the close of the parade, he touched the officers upon the shoulder and invited them 'up-stairs.'

"One or two more of the chief people, perhaps the most bewilderingly solemn of all that solemn throng, fell out and followed after, and Orriker was rather appalled, expecting to encounter nothing but a corpse somewhere aloft, for there was a tedious journey down one hallway and up another, past this corner and that, until they all filed into a spare room in the back attic, and Major Moody reverently lifted a napkin and disclosed half a dozen glasses and three decanters of whisky, brandy and Madeira.

"'I know something about campaigning,' said the Major, 'and what soldiers want; just step up, gentlemen, and help yourselves—oh, excuse me, Captain, Lieutenant, this is Squire Sanders, one of our old townsmen, and this is neighbor Pulsifer; now, what will you take?'

“ ‘Thank you, Major,’ replied Captain Gilson; ‘I am sorry you should have taken all this trouble; I never drink anything, but I shall avail myself of your hospitality to-day—the wine, if you please—Mr. Orriker, let me help you—Mr. Clute, let me fill your glass.’

“Now this was a bold stroke on the part of the Captain, who knew that neither of his Lieutenants, if left to themselves, would take a drop; but he was determined so great an effort to gratify the supposed tastes of strangers in a strange land should not be wholly unrewarded.

“ ‘Come, squire, come neighbor Pulsifer, you will join us.’

“ ‘Why, Moody, ah, I should prefer a little of the brandy, but——’

“ ‘We will both take brandy,’ interrupted Captain Gilson, gallantly coming to the rescue and anxious the old gentleman should make the most of so rare a chance, ‘allow me the pleasure,’ and four tumblers were filled with three good fingers of something that had been in the Major’s cellar from before the time of Jefferson’s embargo——”

“About 1807,” murmured the Assistant-Surgeon to himself; “how nice it would be now——”

“Good, Doctor; I’m thirsty, too,” replied the Colonel, and, in due time, continued—

“Well—on the return of the Heraclidæ, that is, when Orriker went down-stairs, right in the parlor doorway he met the girl that had only blue eyes, beautiful, of course, and easier identified as Miss Jane.

“He was in his uniform, which would have prevented any recognition by her; but there were other difficulties. That short mustache which so impressed the waiter, and by which he was handed down in chop-house annals, had been sacrificed to a communication from the Post Adjutant,

calling his attention to the predecessor of paragraph 1662, A. R., and the Lieutenant's face was as smooth as Pope's poetry.

" 'May I speak to you one moment?' said he, with the most academic of bows to Miss Jane; 'I cannot be mistaken, I think; I saw you in company with two ladies at Mr. Pattycake's some time ago. You left there a small parcel, which I found and tried to return, but was unable to discover you.'

" 'I believe we left a parcel at Mr. Draper's,' said Miss Jane, gracious, but positive, and by no means averse to a discussion of the question with a young man who wore a uniform as though he had never worn anything else.

" 'Possibly, but I found it at the lunch-rooms, a shawl-pin.'

" 'Oh! I am so glad; we were afraid it was lost.'

" 'If you will be kind enough to give me your address I will see to its return—I am very sorry I cannot stay; my company leaves on the first train——'

" 'And the ball?'

" 'Oh! that's for Captain Gilson and Mr. Clute; they remain.'

" 'How disagreeable—for you.'

" 'Never regretted anything more.'

"But the Lieutenant went home content. Miss Jane had told him the shawl-pin was Miss Mary's. It could be left either in town, at 96 Willington Street, or at Palafox Park, where Miss Louise and Miss Mary were staying. In fact, they were all to be together there the next week, and would be glad to see Mr. Orriker should his duties leave him time, as was hardly to be supposed.

"Mr. Orriker was very decidedly of the opinion that with Palafox Park in prospect, his duties would have to take care of themselves, and so stated, with an emphasis

that had not been so very visible where Willington Street was concerned.

"It might be as well to note that Miss Jane had views on art that were incompatible with anything more than toleration of young men, except so far as a uniform brightened up the landscape and afforded material for effective studies of color.

"Miss Louise was fond of experimenting with every variety of the animal, just as Majendie likes to devote his leisure to rabbits, and Miss Mary had serious ideas of life and doubted the advisability of marriage with anybody under a bishop.

"The prospect for Orriker is by no means so roseate as he thinks.

"However, he appeared at the Park Monday morning, as there was no Sunday train, and Saturday afternoon seemed a little premature."

* * * * *

The Colonel shoved his chair back from the table. There was a general burst of expostulation, to which that worthy officer listened with an air of placid surprise, but insisted that he had taken the story to the limits of his own knowledge, and that he was opposed to historical fiction, or mixed aliment of all sorts.

"Why, Colonel," observed the Major, "you remind me of the last war."

"Well, Major, you are always logical, even in your reminiscences; please explain."

"You started out on a question of search, and you retire without any settlement of the issue."

"Ladies and gentlemen," replied the Colonel, "I refer everybody to my wife. She knows the sequel better than I do. I cannot express to you how flattered I am at the interest you apparently feel in Orriker's earrings. I am

going into the library to smoke. 'Those of you who prefer cigars can join me. Those who prefer the story will of course remain.'

Now this was cruel, but for the credit of the regiment we are glad to be able to say that the Colonel found the library by no means crowded. Not a man budged except the Adjutant, who knew something about the brand of cigar the Colonel used, and would not have postponed the chance of one for Scheherazade herself.

The madam conceded the Adjutant to the peculiarities of his taste and station, and, compelled by the presence of the rest, took up the story :

"These cousins were all well known to me, and it may relieve your curiosity if I say that Miss Jane abandoned art, at the invitation of a professor of mathematics, who married her, and died after working out the properties of a newly-discovered curve, in an equation eight hundred pages long.

"She subsequently became the wife of a celebrated authority in social statistics, and is now the author of probably the best cook-book written, since it deals with exact quantities, complete rules and ordinary material.

"Miss Louise married a lieutenant in the navy, with a view of having some time to herself while he was occasionally earning his three years' sea-pay, and as for Miss Mary—her bishop remained behind the ivory gate."

"*In partibus infidelium*," murmured the Doctor. But the madam thought he was dreaming about some prescription, and so left him to his scruples and drams.

"Nevertheless," said she, "Lieutenant Orriker had a very pleasant visit at Palafox Park, judging from the number of times it was repeated.

"The puzzling manifestations of the lost earring were easily explained, inasmuch as when extended into a shawl-

pin it became the common property of the three cousins, by whom it was regarded as what is now called a *mascot*, owing to the mystery attending its first appearance.

“It was found one morning at the foot of the stairway, near the shawl-rack and umbrella-stand.

“Nobody knew anything about it and nothing could be ascertained, so it was finally thought possible it had been introduced into the house by the ghost of Miss Mary's godmother, who had recently died in a far-away land and who was reputed to have had, at least, two weaknesses, a fondness for Miss Mary, and a craze for collecting *bijouterie*, pure and undefiled, by the methods and tastes of a commercial and manufacturing age, all of whose work, whether belonging to office or ornament, smacks of petroleum.

“It was very unpleasant for Mr. Orriker to shatter any of the romantic ideals of Palafox Park, but he submitted to their investigation the charm he wore upon his watch-chain, and it seemed evident enough that it was the duplicate of the pin and with it had constituted the purchase formerly made by that gentleman.

“Nevertheless Aunt Mary—not the cousin, but a namesake of an older generation—always affirmed that these same earrings had once belonged to the family, and maintained a silence as to their history that was very provoking, but proof to all solicitation.

“The girls at last admitted that if the dream of the godmother had to be given up, the Lieutenant would not be an altogether unsatisfactory substitute; but he was required to account for the transfer by any less than supernatural means of the earring from the Barracks on the island to Palafox Park.

“The Lieutenant undertook the investigation, but resolved to conduct it after the manner of Penelope, and

women generally, who never finish anything in order to always have something to do.

“ He very soon satisfied himself that Cousin Jane had on several occasions visited the island where was located the Church of St. Thomas-by-the-sea. This was quite a notorious institution for a variety of reasons. Its rector was young and handsome ; its patrons, wealthy and generous. The harmonies in colored glass that abounded in its walls, the voices of singing men and singing women, that came down from the galleries above, or stole in upon you through the arches and cloisters below, the decorations and the embroidery on the sacred, and the millinery and renown on the profane side of the chancel, made one of the most thoroughly picturesque and attractive interiors to be found in the diocese.

“ Perhaps it was not so much a place to tempt a sinful man to pray for mercy as a place of restful repose, where one could recline upon velvet and think of his faith or fortune, just as predominated the wail of a litany or the voluptuous swell of a hallelujah.

“ Thus it happened that the aspirations of the artist and the taste of the musician found much satisfaction at Saint 'Thomas-by-the-sea, and so were brought together Cousin Jane and that Cousin Cornelia of previous mention, wholly unknown to and unconscious of one another then, though one chanced to occupy pew 31, and the other pew 33, on the Easter Sunday of the year to which this story belongs.

“ This was a mere matter of dates, which the Lieutenant quietly established, as well as the further fact that Cousin Mary arrived, as arranged, at Palafox Park on the very Sunday night in question, where she was joined by Cousin Jane, and where, the next morning, the earring was found.

“But Mr. Orriker afterwards said he saw no reason for obtruding these facts, since, evening after evening, the cousins resolved themselves into a committee of ways and means upon the problem, and always preferred to accept the benevolent interference of the godmother, who was superior to any difficulties of time and space, and had no further use for articles that are no part of spiritual furniture.

“True, the intention was balked of its completeness by the absence of the other ear-ring, but one should not be too avaricious in dealing with the Immortals. Content with what they give is the condition of the process, and the story of the three wishes by which the peasant and his wife found themselves, after all, no better off than before, is a lesson in prayer not to be forgotten.

“So the girls waited, in the patience of true faith, for the fulfillment of the business, and they were rewarded, even beyond their expectations, and, as is the celestial manner, on a wholly different scale, which is the weak point of the drama of Job, where sheep, oxen, camels, sons and daughters are taken away to be replaced, apparently to the satisfaction of the patriarch, by more sheep, more oxen, more camels, more sons and more daughters.

“But if James die, doth George replace him? David knew better when he said, ‘Oh, Absalom, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, oh, Absalom, my son.’

“The earring then on one side is clearly traced to pew 31 and Miss Jane from pew 33 to Palafox Park, where, the same day, the ornament is subsequently found, conveyed thither in some hospitable fold of the wrapping that received it on its detachment from Cousin Cornelia’s ear.

“Naturally at this point ends the story.”

“I have my doubts,” said the Major, “about this last

part of the business, the carriage of the earring to Palafox Park."

"Well," replied the madam, "as to the probabilities of that I am willing they should be tested by the results of an accident with which you are all familiar. Did you, Major, ever lose a collar-button?"

"Certainly—not a week ago."

"Where did you find it?"

"It was—let me see—" Here the Major was suddenly seized with a violent fit of coughing. He was vigorously thumped on the back in that insane way people have when certain something must be done and ignorant of exactly what to do.

In great seeming distress the Major rushed from the room, and in a few minutes thereafter, could have been seen with the Colonel, still quite red in the face, but relieved in mind, and placidly smoking a Reina Victoria.

"I wonder what did become of the collar-button," muttered the Assistant-Surgeon.

But nobody ever knew, except the Major's man, who discovered it where it was never designed to be; but, as was said of Vespasian's silver, recovered from a similar locality, *non olet*.

"Perhaps," interposed the madam, "some other gentleman has doubts——"

"Certainly I could have none after my experience," replied one of the younger captains. "I was struggling with my collar-button the other morning when it suddenly slipped out of my fingers and disappeared.

"I hunted everywhere, the more earnestly since I had no other, and was dressing against time for the early train to town. At last I had to content myself with a pin, which narrowly missed the jugular, as I wickedly thrust it into my shirt.

"But that was only a beginning of misery. My foot pained me all day long, and spoilt a trip among the book-stores to which I had been looking forward for a month, and saving up enough for the especial purpose of securing a two volume edition of Gen. Henry Lee's Memoirs, with notes on the margin, written, as I had reason to suppose, by General Sumter.

"That evening when I reached home without my prize, which had been disposed of just a moment before I hobbled into the place, I unearthed the missing button from the toe of my boot.

"I keep a card of them now stuck into the looking-glass."

"It would seem," added the madam, "that buttons may be as evasive as earrings."

"I feel," interrupted one of the senior lieutenants, "I feel as though I ought to contribute a remark or two on this occasion. Like the saint who carried his own head, so with the woman who unconsciously became the possessor of her neighbor's earring, it is only the first step that makes the trouble. Once at large, these trinkets are amenable neither to law nor logic. I have my doubts about guardian angels, but am clear as to the existence of imps of depravity charged to try the tempers of men. The toilet and the desk are their favorite fields of operation. Not a pin, for instance, can be found on the cushion, but a trip in bare feet over the floor detects any number of them.

"A memorandum suddenly disappears that you know you have seen but a moment before. The hunt for it wastes a half-hour, and, after an explosion that gives the devil a safe mortgage upon your soul, behold! the memorandum appears right before you, looking more innocent than a rose-bud.

“I, too, have a collar-button, only one incident in the history of which I will give this afternoon. It vanished when under process of adjustment, and there was nothing to do but find it, unless I remained in bed, which was impossible, for it was the last of the month, with muster and inspection pending, as well as a visit to the paymaster and a subsequent lunch with my *compadre*.

“I am frequently complimented on my good nature and sagacity, and I felt these were both at stake, and resolved to be firm and circumspect. The first thing to do was to undress and examine carefully each article of my clothing, which I did, pleasantly humming to myself: ‘We may be happy yet.’

“It was useless, so I turned to the bed and took off spread, blanket and sheet, and deposited them in the middle of the floor, still continuing the old familiar strain.

“Then I closely examined the six sides of the mattress, not forgetting the corners nor the melody.

“Giving my attention to the lighter articles of furniture in the vicinity, I piled them up, after examination, upon the mattress. Drawing my sword, I began to rake under the heavier pieces, but I was too tired to sing and out on the parade I could hear muster in progress.

“My temper threatened to rise, and I felt that I must rely upon bodily exercise to keep down spiritual rebellion, so I struck up,

“‘Oh, won’t it be joyful, joyful, joyful,
When we meet to part no more,’

and commenced to kick the smaller impediments about the room.

“Just here the door opened and my wife appeared.

“‘Edwin, oh, Edwin,’ she shrieked, and rushed downstairs to send for the Doctor. Circumstances seemed to

be passing beyond my control. I stuck my sword into the mattress, wrapped myself up in some of the drapery and sat down on the washstand. I ought to state here that I am troubled with *hyperæsthesia*, and my wife knew that at this time I was living mainly upon hot water in the morning and sage tea at night.

“Pretty soon I saw her peering anxiously over the banisters and I remarked in my mildest manner, ‘Putting aside any incompleteness in the way of wardrobe, my dear Isabella, I may truthfully state that I am glad to see you.’

“ ‘Edwin, what is the matter !’

“ ‘Rest assured I am neither mad nor drunk. I have lost my collar-button, and am trying to find it.’

“The door-bell rang and my wife went down to dispose of the Doctor. She said she had an intermittent headache, acute pain at brief intervals over the left eyebrow. The Doctor advised spectacles and diet, with a cessation of all literary labor, which was a shrewd inference on his part, from the contents of the table, consisting of a cook-book, upon—ah—‘How to make bread,’ and an order for Lord & Taylor, which the Doctor evidently mistook for the manuscript of a novel.

“He promised to send over a lotion for topical application, which he did, and my wife presented it to the cook, who was always having ‘miserics,’ and who always felt better after a little medicine.

“When my wife came back I was putting things to rights. She loaned me her collar-button and I went over to explain my absence to the commanding officer. He was very grave at first, but the moment I mentioned my accident he broke down completely. ‘That will do,’ said he ; ‘don’t say any more. I have been there myself.’

"Late the next day, happening to be in the metropolis, I felt thirsty and went into Stewart's to get a glass of iced milk. I knew I had some small change in my pocket and pulled out a handful of the contents to get a quarter, and there among keys, dimes and sea-beans—there, conspicuously on top of everything, was my collar-button. That is all I have to say.' "

"May I ask a question?"

This came from a lieutenant who, by virtue of frequent detail as judge advocate, had acquired a chronic interrogative attitude.

"Certainly."

"Between the morning of your adventure and the time of the iced—milk, had you not changed your dress?"

"Of course."

"And you have no explanations to offer as to the behavior of the collar-button in this transfer?"

"Oh, yes ; it was maliciously at the bottom of everything then."

"One moment, if you please," said the Assistant-Surgeon. "If I heard rightly, you mentioned *sea beans* as part of the produce of your pocket."

"I did."

"I wish I understood why anybody should burden himself with such things."

"As a sure specific against rheumatism."

"Is it possible you can believe that."

"All I know is that since I carried them, I have never had an attack."

But the Assistant was not an adept in cross-examination.

"Your experience, gentlemen," interposed the madam, "will, I think, convince you that there was nothing improbable in the undesigned carriage of the ear-rings from St. Thomas-by-the-sea to Palafox Park."

The Judge Advocate, whose forehead ran back into his occiput like a glacier bisecting an Alpine slope, still succeeded in maintaining as strong an appearance of judicial dubiety as Lord Eldon's wig itself.

Then the Colonel's wife slowly unwound from her head the scarf which at the beginning of our story had attracted the kind intervention of the Quartermaster, and aroused the suspicions of the Assistant-Surgeon. He watched the operation, and thought, "She still has a pretty arm, and likes to show it."

But the Judge-Advocate saw something more. Slowly he rose and with a profound bow said, "Madam, I, too, am a believer."

And the Senior Lieutenant cried out, "Why, these are the very earrings themselves."

And it was so.

But the Assistant-Surgeon, finding he was equally wrong in both remarks and conjectures, went home and resolved hereafter to secure entire freedom from all emotion or desire and spend the rest of his life like the monks of Mount Athos in the search of perfection by contemplating the pit of his stomach.

"Madam, before we go *I* would like a little information on one point."

This was the Chaplain, who, practiced in thinking by subdivisions up as high as fifteenthly, was better enabled than most to keep a firm hold upon any verbal meandering.

"I judge from something said in the early part of your most agreeable continuation of the Colonel's story, that there is a hiatus, so to speak, in the genealogy of these earrings. Is it not so?"

"I'll tell you next Christmas."

BY LAND AND SEA

INTRODUCTION.

How many a year ago was it that Harry Gringo wrote his "Tales for the Marines"? That book was one of the delights of our boy colony in a far Western State, where the only man-of-war we ever set eyes on was the black paddle-wheel, fourth-rate, that we then thought capable of blowing all England into the North Sea, and whose venerable hulk we still mournfully contemplate as one of the many illusions of our past. It was the event of the year when the "Michigan" came paddling into port, and those of us who had read of Midshipman Harry, of the jaunty "Juniata," of faithful Kit Dolphin and toothpick-snapping Captain Jack, swarmed about her wharf, hoping for a sight of somebody who would fill the description of either one of those vivid characters. We gazed with awe upon the officers with their gold-laced caps, and the spruce marine sentry. We watched in vain for the youthful midshipmen whom we supposed infested every war-ship. Surely Marryat had told us so in a dozen books, and Harry Gringo, our Yankee sailor and yarn-spinner, had taught us the same faith. We fraternized with such of the crew as were disposed to be affable; and one glorious day two of those wonderful officers came to dine at our father's house. Just didn't the boys of the neighborhood gather at our corner,—for we had spread the news all over the

ward,—and just didn't some of them indulge in sarcastic comment upon our bliss, especially one young scamp who long since has ceased to be envious of the joys of dining with a brace of naval officers, since for years at a time he has had to do it day after day. They came—the conquering heroes. They dined and were immensely jovial and kindly. But when, after the ceremony was at an end and the gentlemen were smoking their cigars upon the veranda, and we youngsters were brought in and allowed speech with them, there came a shock. I asked the handsome, whiskered lieutenant if he knew Lieutenant Gringo, and he burst out laughing and said, “No; he knew lots of Gringos, but no officer of that name.”

“Why, he wrote ‘Tales for the Marines’!” I reminded him. And the lieutenant laughed still more heartily, and said tales for the marines were things no sailor believed in; and when that paradox was explained, and I went and fetched the book, the kindly fellow took me on his knee and said he had never seen it before, but had heard it spoken of.

The idea of a sailor not reading “Tales for the Marines,” written by one of our own officers!

“Ah,” said the lieutenant, “that is just the reason why. You see, we all know one another so well, and have heard one another's yarns and stories so often, that we never have time to throw away in reading them.” Here was disillusion, indeed.

Then, besides Cooper, Marryat, and Gringo, we boys had other favorites, and the greatest of these was Mayne Reid. We devoured the “Boy Hunters,” and “The Desert Home,” but we simply gloated over “The White

Chief," and the "Rifle Rangers." We wished Captain Reid would come our way and tell us more grand stories of the Mexican war. He never did; but one day there visited us—and we worshipped him with our eyes—a major whose right sleeve was empty; he had left his sword-arm at Molino del Rey, and with him were two younger officers, straight and slender, and they came to dine, and they, too, were jolly and kind to us. But, alas! they had to say they had never met "The Rifle Rangers," never knew Captain Mayne Reid, never read his stories. We boys thought it simply incomprehensible.

Yet, just as did their brethren of the navy, the gentleman of "the old army" explained the matter: "We hear so much of our own cramped and narrow life when in camp or garrison, that when we read at all we want to read of something else."

And so the stories we boys swore by and rejoiced in were things that soldiers and sailors alike held to be unworthy their attention. All very well in their way,—perhaps; but nobody could write anything about their campaigns or cruises they had not seen with their own eyes or heard with their own ears. Why, then, waste time in reading of them?

And yet, here in this little volume a dozen yarn-spinners of the sister services have told their tales, inspired thereto by the publisher. Long years ago he launched before the reading world his "Christmas at Sea," where a lot of Jack-tars sat about the ward-room table, sipped their wine, and each man told a story. Landsmen who read the little book declared their pleasure and interest, and last year "The Colonel's Christmas Dinner" gave

the soldier-boys a chance, and some sailors who saw it, said they liked it better than their own. It simply goes to prove that we find more to please and less to criticise in stories that are not of our daily doings, and there would be actually no hope for a fellow if he had no one but his comrades to read the tales he told. Luckily there are others, many others, in the broad and beautiful land we love. Men and women, girls and boys, in whom Jack at Sea and Jim on the Plains both find loyal and devoted friends, and foremost among these are the dear ones from whom sailor and soldier alike must oftentimes be separated by many a dreary knot or mile,—the dear ones to whom every detail of our lives seems of such unflagging interest,—who listen to our stories of service afloat or ashore with eagerness so flattering or with patience so fond.

At their feet, therefore, we lay this little volume, filled with tribute gathered both "By Land and Sea," and invoke first of all the sympathy of those whom it is our greatest joy to hail,—“Sweethearts and Wives.”

C. K.

BY LAND AND SEA.

THE WARLOCK FIGHT.

I.

THE RECONNOISSANCE.

“What is the matter of one moth the more
Singed in the candle at a summer’s end?”

“Now, how much nicer this is, Will,” remarked a trim artillery officer to his friend as the two sat in the club-room at Fort Monroe, calmly smoking their cigars, at the end of a hard day’s work of target firing,—“but what are you thinking about so hard?”

“I was merely thinking, Mac, what a tale my civilian overcoat could unfold. Last winter, while we were stationed at the arsenal in Washington, every fellow in the class fell desperately in love with some girl or other, and ever since our return they are forever running up on short leaves; my overcoat, being comparatively new, is taken on every trip. Jack Villiers is probably doing the grand with it there at this very moment.”

“Will, why don’t *you* fall in love?”

“In love! why, I am always in love. Every young

lady I meet seems sweeter than the last. That's the trouble: one cannot concentrate under those circumstances; and I am afraid if I let myself go, it may be at the wrong time."

"To-morrow will be Sunday," replied Macnaughten, "and Fielding, the admiral's aid, is going to take a little party over to the Soldiers' Home. Will not you come down and make it pleasant for the young lady? He wants you to come because he thinks you are such a recluse that you will not interfere with his own little scheme. The young lady is going to stay only a month; just your limit for a flirtation; you can work up to almost any limit without danger."

"Who is she, Mac?"

"Miss Arden, from Detroit; she is down at the Hygeia with Mrs. Warren, the wife of a captain of the Second Cavalry, now in the field with General Miles."

"All right; I'll go."

They sat a while longer, chatting and smoking, looking out the while through the casemate embrasure upon the moat and its farther shore, and then parted.

Will Cowan was a young man of a thoughtful turn of mind, studious, but fond of enjoyment, too; rather reserved in manner before strangers, yet open and generous when he felt at home, with a hearty laugh that was all his own, clear brown eyes that reflected the depth and tenderness of his heart, and a well-shaped mouth and chin, indicating his strength of character.

The following afternoon saw the party on its way to the Soldiers' Home on the steam-launch of the flagship. The launch was moored near the mouth of Hampton Creek, and the party started along on foot, Mrs. Warren

and Fielding leading, Miss Arden and Macnaughten close behind them, while Cowan, holding the pretty little daughter of Mrs. Warren by the hand, dawdled along in the rear, admiring the flowers and attempting to prevent little Isabel from cutting off their tall heads with the stick he had permitted her to carry.

"Why don't you go with Cousin Frances?" said the child, quickly perceiving whither his glances were directed.

"Because I don't want to. I'd rather talk to you."

He was holding back from diffidence, yet he was studying the slim figure ahead.

"She is not beautiful," he said to himself, "and yet her eyes are a wonderful blue; that simple braid of blonde hair hanging from her shapely head is rather fascinating, and her hand is the prettiest I have ever seen. Is she frivolous, or merely airy fairy?"

During all the afternoon Cowan held himself aloof, and when the party returned to the hotel he felt that he had not done much to make it pleasant for the fair visitor.

In the evening he called and found her sitting on the upper piazza, a closed book in her hand, gazing out upon the waters.

"A penny for your thoughts," he said. Were they with the moon? wondering if she be indeed

"Pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,—
Wandering companionless
Among the stars."

"No. I want to ask you a question. Listen."

Then she recited tenderly and sweetly the lines beginning,—

“I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright,”

to the end.

“Is this said by a man or by a woman? That is what I want you to tell me,” she added.

“By a man, of course,” he said, quietly. He was very thoughtful, for this seemingly trifling young maiden of nineteen summers had revealed herself in a new light; she had shown in reciting these lines a depth of feeling that he had not suspected.

The office-boy approached and handed her a card, and Lieutenant Fielding followed close upon it. The conversation took a more formal turn, and Cowan soon said good-night.

The young people saw much of each other, and soon became great friends. One bright starlight evening, as Cowan and Miss Arden were sitting on the piazza, Fielding approached and said,—

“It is such a lovely evening, Miss Arden, I thought we might persuade Mrs. Warren to take a stroll with us on the parapet of the fort,—what do you think?”

“That will be lovely, don’t you think, Mr. Cowan? Will you not ask her, please, Mr. Fielding? She is sitting there in the hall.” Then confidentially to Cowan, much to his surprise, she whispered, “I just *love* to hate that man!”

The party soon started, Cowan and Miss Arden on in front, for Cowan’s courage rose wonderfully with that last

remark of hers. Slowly they sauntered along, over the postern bridge, gazing in admiration upon the reflected stars in the moat, talking in low tones, as people do whose thoughts are influenced by a deeper current than that which is moving calmly over the surface, when suddenly the call of the sentinel, "Who comes there?" with the rattle of his gun as he brought it down, roused them from their revery; but the challenge was repeated, and the point of the bayonet came nearer, much to the discomfort of the young lady, who was beginning to be frightened, before Cowan could gather himself sufficiently to answer.

They passed on through the postern and up the ramp by the flagstaff, then along the parapet until they reached the sally-port opposite the commanding officer's quarters, when Miss Arden suddenly said,—

"Can we not sit down there?" pointing to the ledge of cut stone overhanging the outer arch of the sally-port. Down they went, carefully feeling their way so as not to slip, for far below the dark waters of the moat beat warningly against the high scarp wall.

"See how bright it is over towards Norfolk; must be a fire," said she.

Then they talked of other things, forgetting all about the chaperone, who had long ago passed by above without observing them, supposing they were on ahead. Tenderer grew their voices; there was little need for many words; each felt what the other was thinking. Upon the grass, close by his, lay her pretty white hand; he took it in his and kissed it as if he were kissing the cross. The little hand grew cold in his; slowly but firmly it was withdrawn.

"Why, there is the moon, way up in the sky," rang out her clear voice with assumed brightness; "her rising must have been the fire we saw! Come, it is time to go back to the hotel."

So they went out through the sally-port, over the bridge, along the water-battery, past the light-house. Cowan's serious nature influenced both, and almost silently they returned. They had entirely forgotten the chaperone, but there she was, with a very reproachful look upon her beautiful dark face.

"What became of you two? We had a terrible time, for when we came back to the postern after losing you, we found it locked, and Mr. Fielding did not know his way about at all, so we had to inquire our way, and to our horror had to pass through 'Ghost Alley' to reach the main sally-port. Think of it!"

She was soon appeased, however, and Cowan took his leave.

So their acquaintance grew, and each found in the other daily new mines of golden thought and an intenser interest; but the scene on the parapet was never repeated, and Cowan felt that Miss Arden avoided being left alone with him, very delicately, but still effectively, and he noticed, too, that Fielding was much with her, and always dropped in when he wasn't wanted.

One Saturday they all went to Norfolk on the government boat, the "General Wool," and after visiting the navy-yard, had an eventful day in town, seeing the cotton-presses, the oyster-packing establishments, and old Saint Paul's with its quaint church-yard.

As they walked along the street in the crowd they passed a sun-burnt, dark-eyed gypsy woman, kneeling

down on the sidewalk, stroking the head of a little girl standing by her side. Cowan and Miss Arden looked so happily at one another as they passed that the gypsy's face lit up with a kindly smile; it was so generous and sympathetic a smile that Cowan went back and put a piece of money in her hand.

At dusk, as they approached the boat-landing to return, they noticed the gypsy woman off to one side, beckoning to them, so they went to her. She mumbled some words in a low tone and gave them each a tiny vial of attar of roses, singing in a soft voice, so low as to be scarcely heard:

TO HIM.

“*Love* and *jealousy* are thine,
With this vial take thy gall and wine.”

TO HER.

“*Love* and *pride* shall be thy part,
With the joy of love take thy pain, poor heart!”

TO EACH.

“Thou canst not separate the twain,—
Or both or none thou must retain.
But if ever the vial broken hie,
And incense from the fragments flow,
Thy love to another's heart will hie,
And jealousy die and pride lie low.
Yet trust thee in thy single might;
If thy heart be pure and thy spirit right,
Thou shalt win the warlock fight.”

Then she vanished in the gathering darkness.

II.

SKIRMISHING.

“Of that face
What shall be said,—which, like a governing star,
Gathers and garners from all things that are
Their silent penetrative loveliness?

MRS. ARDEN and her daughter were sitting, one lovely June morning, on the piazza of the hotel at Piermont on the Hudson, the former doing some fancy work, wherein she had wonderful taste, the latter reading a book.

Mrs. Arden was a lady of middle age, with delicate, refined features, and a face full of sweetness and character; reminding one continually of Raphael's Sistine Madonna. She had seen much of the world and had profited by all her experience; beautiful, intelligent, always a part of society, she yet cared nothing for the gay world, but enjoyed life rationally.

Miss Arden was reading “The Parisians,” and had just come to the sentence,—

“In the history of the passions each human heart is a world in itself; its experience profits no others. In no two lives does love play the same part or bequeath the same record.”

She thought a moment after reading this, and then said,—

“Little mother, I did have such a good time at Old Point last summer!”

“Yes, but I shall never forgive Mrs. Warren for being so indifferent a chaperone; it was outrageous to give you such freedom, and I am still angry with you, too.”

The stage from the station drove up, and a young man alighted and approached the two ladies.

"Why, Mr. Cowan!" said Miss Arden, in surprise. "My mother, Mr. Cowan. Where do you come from?"

"Oh, I have just been out to Vancouver Barracks with a batch of recruits. I have been travelling steadily for about two weeks, and thought I would run up to see you and spend a few days in the country."

"But our trunks are all packed, and we are going to Narragansett."

"How soon do you start?"

"In an hour." Then, persuasively, "Why not come along?"

"All right, Narragansett goes. I only ask for a little time to make some small purchases in the city."

"We shall be very glad to have your company, Mr. Cowan," said Mrs. Arden; "but you must be worn out with travelling already."

"Not a bit; an officer is used to that."

The days at Narragansett passed very pleasantly and all too swiftly for the lieutenant, who was fast losing his heart to this fair maiden, who had sprung so suddenly, since the past summer, from girlhood into womanhood. The Rockingham, the Casino, the beach, and the rocks afforded variety enough for him, so she were by. Yet he felt more and more every day that he was but a friend of the family, held aloof by unseen spirits that made even his growing love for her actuate him to simulate a feeling of indifference. Miss Arden saw that he was troubled, but could not help him, for her pride demanded much more undivided and assiduous attentions than he had yet paid her.

When Mrs. Arden, therefore, decided to take her daughter, in the first week in August, up to the Adirondacks for awhile, Cowan did not have the courage to accompany them, but remained behind, a perfect picture of the blues, trying to calm the tempest within by taking daily long walks in the neighborhood. In a week, however, he could endure the monotony of her absence no longer, so he threw aside all false pride, and joined them at the Prospect House at Blue Mountain Lake.

There was plenty of amusement,—bowling, rowing on the lake, playing tennis, walking, dancing of an evening, or riding. One day after breakfast they arranged to play tennis, but when they met on the tennis-court near the hotel, Miss Arden said,—

“Let us walk over to Crystal Lake; it is only half an hour away, and they say it is so beautiful; we can play tennis afterward.”

As they passed the front piazza, Mrs. Arden called out,—

“Will you be back by luncheon?”

“Oh, yes,” said Cowan; “but don’t wait for us,” he added, knowing well the uncertainty of all things when young ladies are concerned. So on they went, along the winding path to the Crystal Lake. How calmly it lay there, nestled among the hills, the water clear as crystal! They sat down in a row-boat hauled up there close to the beach.

“Do you see how clear it is?” said Miss Arden, enthusiastically. “Look at the pebbles and logs away down below.”

“Yes, it is quite a romantic spot,” said he, very calmly looking into the depths of her blue eyes. He was fall-

ing in love, but she was eluding him of late, and so he was worried. This happy being was a little too much like a butterfly for his serious nature.

“But would I have her serious?” he thought. “What would a serious butterfly be like? Would it not be better to let the bright butterfly nature develop to its utmost perfection?”

Suddenly she clapped her hands and cried out,—

“Let’s walk around it!”

Cowan said “Very well,” but, always feeling his responsibility, he instinctively looked up the lake and saw that it was marshy at the far end, and might be miles long; then, too, the shore on the left was a vertical bluff, and he knew at once that they would have to walk back some distance from the lake, and might lose their way. But he was in the habit of agreeing with ladies on all small matters, asserting himself only on important points, but then very decidedly.

“I don’t think any one at the hotel has been around it,” she added; “we’ll be the first.”

Cowan looked at his watch; it was half-past nine. They followed, at first, a foot-path that led along the margin of the lake a short distance, and then entered the brush; but soon finding this very thick and difficult to get through, Cowan suggested that perhaps it would be more open on the ridge, so they climbed up there. But it was no improvement,—only the primeval forest, dead trees piled one upon another, often to a height of six feet or more, some newly fallen, some decayed into a slightly coherent dust, covered with moss. They clambered over them and forced their way through the bushes, Cowan ahead, to search out the easiest way,

Miss Arden (who was a good walker) following, with her white jacket wrapped up carefully in the skirts of her tennis-gown to preserve its purity. After a hard climb they descended to the upper end of the lake, where the shore was low and flat, and strewn over with logs. There they sat down to rest on a log projecting into the lake, and looked down once more on the mirrored surface.

"It is now half-past eleven," said Cowan after a time; "we can either return the way we came and get back in time for luncheon, or we can go around, in which case we may be a little late, because I think we will find it a little farther that way."

"Why, we'll go around, of course."

The walk was easy for a while, so they trudged happily along. Suddenly Miss Arden remarked,—

"We are going the wrong way; the sun was behind us a little while ago and now it is ahead."

"True; but I think a ravine makes in here, and we will turn again when we reach the head of it. However, sit down here on this dead tree, and I will run back to see if the lake is still there; but do not move from this spot, little girl."

He soon returned, looking just a shade serious.

"The lake is not there," he said.

"Are we lost?" she whispered, turning pale.

"What is the matter with you?" said he, a little severely, but looking earnestly on the sweet face. His manner gave her confidence at once. He sat down beside her; the tree, which was completely decayed, gave way and they rolled over on the ground, both laughing heartily as they sprang up again.

"What shall we do?" she inquired.

"Sail by the sun," was the answer; "northeast must be our direction, approximately."

They walked on, laughing and joking, Cowan doing his best to entertain Miss Arden with stories, to make her forget the situation. Sometimes he would go on far ahead to pick out the way; then he would return and walk by her side. Up hill and down, over great heaps of fallen trees, through dense underwood, over rocky places and up steep slopes,—no footpath anywhere, only the Adirondack forest.

"Don't you think we had better cut marks on the trees?" asked Miss Arden.

"What for?" said he, with mock surprise, knowing well her meaning, but also aware of the fact (this he kept entirely to himself, however), that in his tennis clothes he carried no pocket-knife.

Occasionally they sat down to rest. Calmly they discussed the situation: if night overtook them he was to build her a bower and sit up all night and watch.

"We will have a big camp-fire," she exclaimed.

He smiled; but did not tell her he had no matches.

On they wandered, and lo! they came upon a lake. Could it be Crystal Lake? They started down the slope, when they heard voices.

"A rescuing party from the hotel!" said Miss Arden.

They called and were answered; they hallooed till they were hoarse, but finally the voices died away. They tried to get to them, but the ground was too marshy; twice they essayed it and sank up to their ankles in the mud.

"What shall we do now?" said she, ruefully.

"Sail northeast," he answered, laughing.

They walked on a little way, when Miss Arden suggested that they follow the voices. They tried once more and found to their joy an old corduroy road, which soon brought them through the tall marsh grass to where it had been pushed aside by the people that called to them. They followed the trail through the long grass, crossing over the creeks on logs evidently placed there for that purpose, tired and hungry, for three long hours, when they finally reached a farm-house.

"Was that you we heard in the woods?" said the farmer-boy, as he handed Miss Arden a glass of milk. "Why, we thought it was the cows."

Half an hour more brought them home in time for a late dinner. Mrs. Arden and several friends sat at table with them, to hear them relate their adventures.

"Were you not afraid of snakes in that tall marsh grass?" asked a young lady.

"I never thought of that, did *you*?" turning to Cowan.

"Yes, and I was terribly afraid *you* would."

"Why didn't you say something about it? it makes me creep now to think of it!"

When Mrs. Arden and her daughter went up to their rooms that night, the mother remarked,—

"He is a splendid fellow. Not always sincere, but always reliable."

"But I found him, little mother, remember that."

When Frances Arden reached her own room she unclasped a light gold chain that was fastened about her neck and held it out before her; a tiny vial was dangling at the end.

"He has not breathed one word of love to me this

entire summer ; and yet I think he loves me ;—but no one seeing him with me would suspect it, he is so calm and composed, not a bit like a lover. He does not seem to love *me*, but rather an *ideal* that I represent ! I will not be loved so !”

The little vial fell on the rug at her feet ; she gave a little cry and hurriedly picked it up.

“ Suppose it had been broken !” she gasped.

A faint odor of roses filled the air. The moon shone in upon her and warmed the soft colors on the cheeks and neck,—

“ As down she knelt for heaven’s grace and boon.”

III.

THE ATTACK.

“ Filled from the heart to the lips with love.”

A SUMMER evening in the Highlands, the sun shedding his last rays over the hills, the river moving silently below in the gathering twilight, the green plain lying peacefully between ; to the north, Storm King and Breakneck, two giant sentinels that guard the nation’s eagle’s nest from the rude northern blast of winter, are silently reposing.

The review is over ; all is quiet on the plain ; the cavalry detachment is marching to its barracks ; all the beauty and the chivalry are gathered at the reception to the Board of Visitors, held at the superintendent’s quarters.

“ Mr. Cowan,” said Mrs. Tracy, the wife of the superintendent, “ come, let me present you to a young lady who is here on the Board with General Du Pont’s party.”

They passed through the hall out on the veranda.

"Miss Arden——" began Mrs. Tracy, but she saw there was no necessity for any more words. Cowan was taken by surprise and showed it, while Miss Arden's bright blue eyes had a merry twinkle in them. Cowan felt hurt that she had not informed him of her coming, but he assumed an indifferent air, as was his wont under such circumstances.

"What are you doing out here all alone?" he asked, as if it were quite natural that she should be on the post.

"I am breathing in this lovely air and scenery. Do you know, I think it far prettier than the view of the valley of the Oos from the old castle at Baden-Baden, or the valley of the Neckar from the Heidelberg castle, or even that of the Thames at Richmond."

"Yes, it is very pretty, but I dare not say much on this point; I always think of my cadet days, when my old schoolmaster came to see me in yearling camp and asked me how I enjoyed myself. I said that so far life had not been very pleasant. 'What,' he said, 'with all these beautiful hills about you, you can be unhappy?' I followed the sweep of his hand with my eyes, and there they were, sure enough, but I confess I had not noticed them before!"

"How funny! but you have learned to appreciate them since, have you not?"

"Oh, yes."

After a little pause, he said, hesitatingly,—

"Can we not take a little stroll, Miss Arden? They will not miss us in there."

"Indeed, I should like it, of all things."

They sauntered across the plain toward Trophy Point,

"How do you like your duties here?" she inquired.

"Very much, in general, for it is interesting to teach; but the work is very confining, and in May, when the daisies and the dandelions come, I have a terrible longing to be out in the sunshine. But I find teaching makes one too dictatorial."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, only yesterday, coming from church, I had three discussions, in each of which I became angry because my view was disputed."

"What was it about? Tell me."

"I said that two things in the sermon disappointed me. One was the reference to the relation between the length of the humming-bird's bill and the depth of the flower into which it had to penetrate, which the minister passed by with the simple remark, that the God that could make either, could also make the length of the bill to vary with the depth of the flower, which is quite true, but which has nothing of the grand in it; it savors of the idea of special creations, which no sane man of this nineteenth century believes in."

"Now you are becoming dictatorial again."

"Am I? Well, to me the idea of evolution in all things is a much grander conception of the power of the Almighty, than separate acts of creation for every species; moreover, to me it involves no contradiction of the Scriptures, and certainly does not touch the essence of the Christian religion."

"But would you have ministers preach evolution?"

"Why not? The best sermon I ever heard was by a minister who preached it. His subject was very simple, too: 'What shall we teach our children?'"

“What was his answer to that?”

“The first sentence in the Lord’s Prayer, the fatherhood of God.”

“What was the other point in your discussion?”

“The statement that scientific men are always trying to find evidence to contradict Scripture.”

“But that is true, is it not?”

“The smaller scientist may do so, but the great ones have been the most modest men in the world, and,” he added mischievously, “have held on to faith as long as they could.”

“You are the most inconsistent example of inconsistency I have ever seen.”

They laughed; then he suddenly asked her,—

“Why did you not tell me you were coming?”

She changed color just a trifle. They had reached Trophy Point; she stood still a moment to look up the river; the changing colors in the sky over Newburgh made a lovely background for the water, lying there amidst the Highland hills more like a lake than a river.

“Because I did not think you cared.”

Cowan smiled into her face. He was happy again; evidently, his caring made some difference to her. They walked on, these two, down by the Siege Battery, around Flirtation Walk, resting a while on the rock overlooking the light-house at Gee’s Point, and again on the green parapet of Battery Knox, forgetting the outer world, each conscious only of the other’s presence.

There was to be a hop at Cranston’s that evening, and Cowan joined General Du Pont’s party on its arrival there. Lieutenant Fielding had come with the party, and a lover’s quick eye told Cowan that he was not alto-

gether indifferent in his attentions to Miss Arden. The little imps of jealousy were already whispering wicked things to his heart, but he decided to make the most of that day, whatever the outcome might be. He was strongly tempted to stay away from Miss Arden all the evening, but he fought bravely against his mood and conquered, and so deliberately walked up to her and engaged her in conversation; then he asked her to walk over to the corner of the broad piazza, where the moon was creeping in. There they sat down.

“How lovely the moonlight is! I often think of the days in Florida, when I used to tell the children fairy-tales of the moonlight track across the water. Shall I tell *you* one?”

“Yes,” she said, very softly.

“May I have this dance, Miss Arden?” said Fielding, stepping up to them.

“I think I will not dance this one, Mr. Fielding.”

“What shall it be about?” continued Cowan,—“about a pair of the very deepest blue eyes and a soft cheek, where the color of the rose comes and goes, and a little hand whose touch is magic;—but behind all that a cold, indifferent heart, too gay in its own happiness to feel the suffering of the poor stray heart that——”

“*Must* that heart be so very cold?”

“To make our fairy-tale *true*, it must.”

The moon, coming out from behind a cloud, shone full upon her face, but her eyes were cast down, and she did not notice it. He could see the color come and go.

“Now may I have a dance?” said Fielding, approaching once more.

“I will not dance this evening; I am very tired.”

"And that other heart," Cowan went on; "do you know how the little imps of doubt and jealousy are torturing it?"

"I am very sorry."

"Will sorrow make the cold heart warm, do you think?"

"Oh, they are dancing the reel; shall we go and look at them?"

As Cowan was wending his way homeward from Craney's (where the party was stopping) that night, he was singing in a low tone, and very tenderly,—

"In meine Augen siehst du mehr
Als Mond und Sterne wissen!"

IV.

THE CHARGE.

"Yet still,
Oh, listless woman, weary lover!
To feel once more that fresh, wild thrill,
I'd give—but who can live youth over?"

"PILLNITZ, vorn absteigen!" called out the captain of the boat going up the Elbe from Dresden, as it was making one of its frequent landings. Cowan, who had been sitting in deep thought, jumped up and hastened forward, but there was plenty of time; nobody is in a hurry in Germany. After some delay the landing was finally made, and Cowan sauntered slowly through the village, inquiring his way to the villa occupied by Mrs. Arden.

He entered by the little garden-gate and walked

toward the house, but seeing figures in the garden under the trees, he started in that direction. Mrs. Arden and her daughter were seated there on rustic benches, a short distance apart, reading.

"Why, Mr. Cowan!" said Mrs. Arden, seeing him approach, "we were speaking of you but a moment ago. We are thinking of taking a little trip to the Rhine, and want your strong arm for protection and your good company."

They chatted awhile, telling their several experiences since last they met. Then Miss Arden said,—

"Come, I want to show you the view from the hill; brother will go with us."

They strolled along through the fields, gathering the bright red poppies as they went, which she stuck in her belt. What a delicate fairy-flower she seemed herself! A lark rose out of the meadow and sailed up into the sky, scattering music on the way. They stopped to listen till he was far out of sight.

"That is the skylark; how happy he seems!" said he, with a sigh.

When they reached the top of the hill they sat down on the soft grass to enjoy the view. The valley of the Elbe opened out wide before them, and they could see in the distance the hills of Bohemia. Their conversation was not animated, for Cowan was sad and talked little, amusing himself by playing with the little brother; while Miss Arden seemed nervous about something. She soon remarked,—

"We must go back for afternoon tea."

They found Baron Heuduck in the garden, talking with Mrs. Arden. He was a gentleman past middle life,

cultured and refined, and a great traveller. Mrs. Arden was serving tea.

"Here, Mr. Cowan," she said, "you shall have the red cup; that's for the artillery. You can smoke, too, if you like."

The baron engaged Cowan in conversation, talking mostly in German, but occasionally lapsing into French, to be recalled by Cowan's puzzled expression, when he lost the thread of the story. Miss Arden sat near her mother; they were talking very earnestly in an undertone.

A young Garde Reiter in his light-blue uniform approached the ladies and made his bow; after saying a few words to them he shook hands with the baron; then stood before Cowan in a military position, and with his hand at his cap, as if saluting, said,—

"I am Count von Arnim."

Cowan mumbled in a half-embarrassed way his own name, and then the party sat down again. Von Arnim took a seat near Miss Arden, and Cowan immediately recognized a rival. Miss Arden was nervously pulling at her handkerchief; the count sat close by her and spoke in a low tone to her, evidently with much feeling. At length Mrs. Arden sent her daughter into the house on some pretence. Cowan noticed that the count disappeared among the trees in the garden soon after, strolling off quite indifferently, as if he were simply enjoying the air. Cowan's face grew darker, for he knew intuitively what was happening, while poor Mrs. Arden was doing her best to entertain him.

"Do you remember Mr. Harvey?" she said; "he is consul at Odessa, now."

"Yes, but he never interested me much; he is not a man among men," said Cowan, who was in no mood to agree with any one.

"He is such a good man, however."

"That is just the trouble; such men never know human nature."

Mrs. Arden tried several other subjects, but did not succeed in making Cowan unbend. Finally, Miss Arden arrived, pale and breathless, and sat down quickly by her mother. Cowan turned to talk to the baron, but heard her quite distinctly as she whispered to her mother,—

"I tried to avoid it, but it was no use; so we had it out."

In a few moments Mrs. Arden said, addressing Cowan,—

"We will start for the Rhine to-morrow morning at eight; can you be ready? Then we will expect you at the station."

As Cowan smoked his cigar that night at the Bellevue, his heart was very heavy. "Had that count not received some encouragement," he said to himself, "he would never have proposed. Yet she cannot help being pretty and bewitching, I suppose. Nor would I have her sit and mope for me all winter, would I? And yet—I wish I had not come." He was fighting the warlock fight.

The journey down the Rhine to Cologne and up again to Mannheim was very restful to the little party. Then they went to Franzensbad in Bohemia, where Mrs. Arden had been directed by her physician to drink the waters. Their life there was very quiet for a time, but they soon found old friends and made new ones. Baron Heuduck was there, and a Baroness von Keil with her daughter,

whose acquaintance Mrs. Arden had made in Dresden during the past winter.

One day they were all seated at a round table in the garden; the baroness was entertaining Cowan with an account of her ailments, while the baron was in conversation with Miss Arden. He was a great deal with Miss Arden of late, as Cowan had noticed. The gypsy had read his character well, or else her spell was upon him. Suddenly the baroness missed her daughter.

"Oh, Mr. Cowan, will you not go and look up my daughter, and bring her back here?"

Cowan, who had been sent on this errand once or twice before, was glad to get away for a while, for his heart was sore. He was devoted in his attentions to Miss Arden, but his jealousy left him cold and formal, so it was only misery to him to be near her. He saw the young lady he was supposed to be in search of, at the grounds where the party of the queen of Bohemia was playing croquet. But he sauntered away in quite another direction. Suddenly he noticed the figure of a dark-eyed woman holding a little girl by the hand; it was the gypsy woman who had given him the little flask. He walked rapidly up to her, put a piece of money in her hand, and was about to return the flask and ask some questions, when the baron and Mrs. Arden passed close by on their way over to the music stand. Cowan turned to salute them, and when he looked again for the gypsy she was gone.

Meanwhile, Miss Arden and the baroness were left alone at the table.

"Mr. Cowan is a very fine fellow," said the baroness; "but I fear he is not to be depended upon."

"Why do you think that?"

"Well, Mrs. English came over on the same steamer with him, and she said that he was so devoted to Miss Reed that he was known to all aboard as 'Miss Reed's officer.' "

"Are not people always saying such things?"

"Yes, but that is not all. Before sailing he sent a box of flowers to a young lady at West Point. On the steamer it was Miss Reed; but before they landed at Liverpool he became very attentive to another young lady and followed her to Paris, and there, meeting a young lady he had known at Newport (he told me this himself only this morning), he came very near going to Norway with her party."

Miss Arden's heart was aching. She turned away for relief, and there a short distance before her she saw a figure of a woman moving along as if avoiding notice. Miss Arden grasped the little flask at her throat and was about to start after her. Just then the baron and Mrs. Arden approached.

"Come, little daughter," said Mrs. Arden, noticing the pained expression on the pale face, "I have something to say to you."

The baron sat down. At that moment Cowan approached.

"You have not found her?" said the baroness.

"No," replied Cowan, wearily.

"Then I must go and find her myself," she said, evidently expecting Cowan to accompany her, but he sat down by the baron.

"What a sweet girl Miss Arden is, and what a fine figure she has!" said the baron, looking after the mother and daughter.

"Yes, rather good," said Cowan, assuming indifference.

"She has a mind of her own, however," continued the baron. "What a time her mother had with her last winter, when one of the Garde Reiters, Riederer, was so devoted to her. Mrs. Arden learned that he was very dissipated, but Miss Arden would not give him up, insisting that people were slandering him. One day Mrs. Arden came to me, crying bitterly. 'What shall I do? what shall I do?' she said. I had a hard time straightening the matter out."

Cowan was sick at heart. He rose and walked away without a word. He overtook Mrs. Arden and her daughter, and walked to their villa with them. Count von Arnim was there awaiting their return. Cowan had intended to say good-by and start home on the next steamer, but now he determined to see if fate had anything else in store for him, so he stayed for supper.

After supper they sat on the veranda and talked of Heidelberg, and the white caps there. The count belonged to that corps in his student days. Then they spoke of the duelling in the student corps and in the army. Cowan had been very quiet.

"Do they have duelling in the American army?" asked the count.

"No, not at present," said Cowan, quietly; "it is forbidden."

"Suppose an officer were to fight a duel, what would be done to him?"

"He would be hung for murder," said Cowan, pronouncing each word distinctly.

The count looked utterly disgusted. He did not

remain long. Mrs. Arden and the baron, finding the air chilly, went back into the drawing-room, while Cowan and Miss Arden remained. Cowan was cold, almost cruel in his words, and although Miss Arden made a great effort to amuse him and entice him out of his unhappy mood, they soon lapsed into long silences. Then Cowan saw by what little light there was that tears were standing in her eyes. He came to her, put his arms about her, and, without a word, pressed his lips to hers in a long tender kiss, then asked, while she was struggling to free herself,—“Am I forgiven, sweetness?”

“No,” she said, decidedly, and ran to her room.

He entered the drawing-room and found Mrs. Arden on the divan. He kissed her hand and knelt down by her side, asking for her assistance. She put both her hands on his head and kissed him quietly on the eyes.

“Never mind, poor boy,” she said, “it will all come right. I cannot let her go yet. She is not good for much, but she is the best I have, my only one.”

As Cowan left the house he heard a sad voice, singing:

“Behuet dich Gott, es wär zu schön gewesen,
Behuet dich Gott, es hat nicht sollen sein.”

V.

THE PURSUIT.

“Good the judgment of a father;
Better still, a mother’s counsel;
Best of all, one’s own decision.
* * * * *
Better be the whiting’s sister,
And the friend of perch and salmon,
Than an old man’s slave and darling.”

COWAN is sitting in his quarters alone, smoking his

after-dinner cigar; his Irish setter is lying on the rug before the fireplace, and the black kitten is coiled up on the divan. Without, the March winds are rattling the shutters.

“So that little dream of mine,” he said to himself, “is over. All my interest in my work for the past two years has been for her sake,—why should I care for my own? But, then, we should do our duty for duty’s sake, we are told; oh, yes, that is all very well, but I do not care to,” he said, impatiently, and walked about the room. “I can only drift now. Yet, how she has become a part of my life! wherever I turn there is some reminder of her. No act of mine that was not in some way connected with a thought of her.

“But why should I make myself unhappy over a frivolous girl that does not care for me? Have I loved her all this time, and did she never really love me at all? Ah, yes, when I kissed her little hand and it turned cold and trembled in mine, did she not love me then? Why, then, should she rave about Riederer, and worry that sweet little madonna mother so, if she loved me? When I told her the mock fairy-tale at Cranston’s, did not her color come and go with the pulses of her heart? But wherefore, if she loved me, did she encourage Von Arnim, while I was far away, so that he should propose to her? And when I kissed her at Franzensbad, did she not put out her hands for one instant, as if about to admit a little love for me? And now I hear the old baron is her constant attendant! I cannot understand.”

He sat down again, with a dejected air, when suddenly he caught sight of a little vial lying before him.

“Ah, there is the secret! Love and jealousy I accepted in one gift. If I should break it? Then, the gypsy said, my love will pass at once to another. What does that mean? Shall *I* love another, or shall my love for her pass to another, who will then love her as I do now? Let us try it.” He stepped over to the fireplace. “I will hold it thus over the cold marble, and then—no,—no, I do not care to love another; let fate decide in her own way.”

The servant entered with a letter; it had a foreign post-mark, one unfamiliar to him; he recognized the handwriting as Miss Arden's and tore the letter open; it was dated at Monaco. There was not much in it, only that they were travelling a little previous to returning home, which she thought would be in August. Then came a little joke: she had decided to try her luck at the bank, for if the old saying be true, considering her luck in love, she thought she ought to break the bank. Venice she spoke of as a probable resting-place on the way.

“No address by which I can reach her,” said Cowan, as he threw down the letter; “no clue to finding her but the fact that they will probably stop in Venice for a while: I will go to Venice.”

A lover's decision, truly. The tenth of June (the cadet examinations over) found him on board of the French steamer, bound for Havre. In Geneva, according to previous arrangement, he was joined by Macnaughten from Spain, and by another comrade from Paris, and then the three set out on a walking tour across the Alps. That was a wonderful tour, never to be forgotten. The views of the valley of Chamonix through the rifts in the

fog, coming out like a negative plate being developed, as they climbed up to the Pavillon Bellevue; the snow-storm on the Col des Fours, where the snow lay waist-deep and all the stakes that marked the path were blown down, and they were all but lost in the driving snow; the Allée Blanche and Courmayeur, lying so restfully between these grand giants that rise into the regions of perpetual snow; the steep ascent to the Theodule Pass past the sharp peak of the Matterhorn, so near it seemed that they could touch its abrupt rocky sides; down over the great glacier to Zermatt. These scenes of magnificent grandeur and the bracing air gave life an intenser interest and reality and drove away all melancholy.

From Brieg they went over the Simplon down to the plains of Italy. What a transition from the cold, rugged Alps, to the land of sun and olives! How peacefully the rich land lay there in the warm sun! No wonder it has been fought over by the armies of Europe! It was the very atmosphere of love, and in consequence Cowan began to grow restless as soon as they reached the lakes. At Bellagio he can loiter along no more, but must leave his friends to hurry post to Venice.

All day long, day after day, he roamed about afoot or skimmed along in a gondola aimlessly, hoping to see a face, yet he saw it not. One day, as he was gliding along on the canal in a gondola, he saw a woman, holding a little girl by the hand, crossing the bridge before him. Can it be the gypsy woman? He landed and followed hurriedly in pursuit, but he did not find her.

"Yet it may be a good omen," he said.

A week passed and he decided to go to Munich. He strolled over to take a last look at the lion of St. Mark

Then he decided to enter St. Mark's ; it had a curious fascination for him, this tinge of the East on everything. He wandered about, trying to picture to himself Venice in its golden days, when suddenly he found himself face to face with Miss Arden. She gave a little cry of surprise : there before them on the cold floor lay the two vials broken in pieces, the sweet odor of roses filling the air like incense. They gazed upon each other, and behold, the love of each passed to the other, and there was no trace remaining of jealousy or pride,—only true love and faith.

He took both her hands in his and kissed them reverently.

“So a little warmth has come into that fairy heart, after all,” he said, smiling.

“And you will never be dignified and reserved again ?” she said, archly. “You saw only my pride and would not see my love for you,” she added.

“And you credited me only with jealousy,” he answered.

“How the little imps of pride and jealousy have worried us,” she said ; “but life will be all the sweeter now. And the gypsy woman told us true.”

“Yes,” said the gentle voice of the little mother coming up behind them, “you have won the warlock fight.” Then, turning to her daughter, “And you are not going to marry the baron, after all my persuasions ?”

Miss Arden bit her lip, but her face brightened at once :

“Do you know, little mother, I believe he was in love with *you* all the time.”

Then it was Mrs. Arden's turn to look displeased, but her daughter laughed so merrily that she soon smiled again.

Then they passed out into the light of heaven. They did not notice the dark figure of a woman, holding a little girl by the hand, over against the great campanile, smiling blessings upon them as they passed, as a guardian angel might. So they passed on, these two, in happiness, and lived a life of love and faith, free from all pride and jealousy. No one was ever refused an alms by them, for whenever they gave they felt that they were but paying the debt they owed the dark-eyed gypsy woman.

TAMBA.

"GREAT Scott, what a splendid-looking fellow! A perfect Achilles. Who is he?" inquired one gentleman of another as they lounged in the superb reading-room of the Manhattan Club.

He was in truth a perfect specimen of a man, a Hercules in strength, an Apollo in form, a sculptor's ideal carved from ebony. Yes, he was black, but with features regular, clear-cut, as perfect in outline as the pure-blooded mountaineer of Circassia, a descendant of the prophet chieftain—Shamyl. He resembled the stately native of India—the grave, dignified bearing of the Sepoy, possessing, in fact, but few traits or characteristics usually accredited to the African race. He was six feet three inches in height, straight as an arrow, broad-

shouldered, with chest deep and full, limbs sinewy and well-rounded, and arms that were perfect in their development. Beneath the fine silky texture of his glistening skin, the swell of every muscle, the curve of every line was plainly discernible. His hands, slight, sinewy, and tapering, possessed the power of a steel vise, while his strength was something wonderful, and fully in keeping with his matchless physique. His eyes were large, of a deep brown, kindly in expression, but capable of gleaming with ominous fires when the pulsations of his heart were throbbing under recollections of exciting episodes connected with his eventful career. His hair curled closely to his well-poised head, and a moustache shaded his mouth, conveying in every line firmness, determination, and courage. Such was Tamba, the personal attendant of Lieutenant Merryhew, United States Navy, retired, between whom existed as warm a sentiment of regard and friendship as ever was fostered in the human heart.

“I am well acquainted with the somewhat stirring incidents connected with Merryhew’s first acquaintance with his superb follower. I have heard the lieutenant relate the yarn, as he terms it, on a couple of occasions, and, being a pretty good sailor, flatter myself I can render the nautical portion of it with a true salty flavor. Would you like to listen to the story? It will be an hour ere dinner is announced and by that time Merryhew will be here himself, and I shall be pleased to introduce you to as fine and gallant a fellow as ever trod the quarter-deck or swung a trumpet.”

A general murmur of assent greeted the proposition, cigars were lighted, comfortable positions assumed, and

without further preliminaries the narrator began the story :

“A number of years ago, it does not matter how many, Merryhew found himself in command of one of those miserable ten-gun brigs that had been detailed to cruise on the west coast of Africa. Merryhew had been executive officer of the brig, and it was owing to the fatal coast fever, which carried off many a gallant soul, that our friend gained his first command.

“It was just at daylight, one morning, with the fever-haunted coast close aboard, that the lookout stationed on the foretop-sail yard reported something, a mere speck, bobbing about in the slanting rays of the sun. By the aid of a powerful glass, the object was finally made out as a battered, time-worn, native canoe. The man-of-war was becalmed, rolling, dipping her bows into the long regular swell, making considerable fuss but no headway, with canvas hanging idly from spar and yards that creaked a dismal response to every heave of the glassy swells. An hour passed, the set of the current bringing the canoe perceptibly nearer to the helpless brig-of-war. Actuated more from a spirit of restlessness than convictions of duty, Merryhew ordered the swift-pulling whale-boat to be called away, and the next instant he was in the stern-sheets, heading direct for the drifting derelict.

“It was barely possible, mused the lieutenant, as he mopped his brow, that a human being might be an inmate of the cockle-shell, and it will make an item for the log anyway, showing vigilance, and all that sort of thing.

“And sure enough, the lieutenant’s determination to

overhaul the craft met with its reward, coupled with the satisfaction of rescuing from a horrible, lingering death a human being.

“ Stretched in the bottom of the crazy cockle-shell was the inanimate form of a poor emaciated native, with barely life enough left to cause his heart to flutter. The sailors carefully and tenderly passed him into the trim man-of-war’s boat; in ten minutes they had regained the brig; the surgeon buckled to his work, but Merryhew did all the nursing, and that was by long odds the greatest half of the battle. The lieutenant had a hammock swung in the airy after-cabin, where every attention was bestowed upon the poor fellow. By careful and unremitting attention the negro was restored to life and health, testifying his gratitude by acknowledging Merryhew as his master, upon whom he waited with the fidelity and devotion of a spaniel.

“ It was thus that the lieutenant obtained his body-servant, Tamba, the magnificently-proportioned fellow who attracted the attention and aroused the enthusiasm of our friend there.

“ It appears that Tamba was the son of a king ruling some inland tribe. In a skirmish with a hostile force, the prince with the dusky skin was captured, carried to the coast, where, in an effort to effect his escape by means of the crazy, worm-eaten canoe, he was blown and drifted off the coast, coming within an ace of losing his life. From that day he has been Merryhew’s constant attendant, absolutely refusing all overtures to return to his native land. Generally where you see one, there will you meet the other, and with a right royal mien Tamba carries himself. He really shows his lineage, and the

blood he has in his veins. It is bound to assert itself, be the skin white, black, or yellow, and I am a believer in blue blood, gentleman, and an established lineage, be it man or beast.

“But wait, keep your seats. I have not yet commenced the yarn. I have merely explained the accident, if you please, through which the lieutenant secured his prize. The exciting portion of the story has yet to be related.”

Cigars were replenished, chairs drawn a trifle closer together, the club-men's interest was thoroughly aroused, which fact stimulated the narrator to score a success in adding another laurel to his reputation as a successful story-teller.

“There was one incident connected with Merryhew and his sable follower, which would seem to emphasize the theory that there is more or less destiny woven in with our existence here on earth. Be that as it may, it was a fortunate day in the lieutenant's log when he rescued Tamba from that old shattered canoe.

“A long, irregular swell was heaving in from the westward, causing the heavily-sparred brig to roll and wallow in the most exasperating manner. Not a breath of air was stirring, the sea was placid as the face of a burnished mirror, the canvas tugged and slatted aloft, responding lustily to each erratic movement of the vessel, while the various reef-points kept up a lively and never-ceasing species of devil's tattoo, most trying to the nerves of the sorely-tried crew.

“Standing abaft the main-royal backstay, leaning carelessly against the low bulwarks, the commanding officer appeared buried in a deep revery. A vicious roll, a sudden lurch, that threw many of the men off their feet,

a dull creaking aloft as the spanker-gaff swung to windward, a smothered exclamation, followed by a loud splash, were sounds that greeted the ear of the astonished officer who had charge of the deck.


“ ‘Man overboard!’ was the startling cry. ‘Call away the first cutter!’ came from the quarter-deck. ‘Quietly, my lads, quietly; but work quickly, for your lives.’

“Springing to the taffrail, the officer threw a life-preserver to his superior, who was a few yards astern, the current and swell causing the light craft to drift rapidly off shore.

“The cry and unusual excitement had brought officers and men tumbling on deck, scarcely realizing what had occurred. But more than one swarthy, sunburned cheek paled as the form of their commander in the water astern was revealed to them.

“ ‘My God!’ exclaimed the senior lieutenant as he staggered against the main life-rail, his face white from suppressed excitement and emotion, “the boat will be too late, and we are powerless. Look there! Great heavens! ’tis the shark.’

“For days, following in the wake of the brig, a huge shark had persistently clung, making no attempt to bite at the tempting morsels of salt pork deftly placed on keen, sharp hooks. Close under the counter, lurking in the deep shadows, the man-eater maintained his position, occasionally turning on his side, his dull and leaden eyes appearing to mock the efforts of the officers as they brought their carbines to bear upon him. The sailors viewed the monster with superstitious dread; the berth-deck oracles wagged their heads, predicting death and disaster, and that right soon.



“There was a sudden movement on the part of the shark, his dorsal fin cut through the water, leaving no trace behind it, while a luminous, glancing body shot suddenly into the sunlight, which all hands recognized, and shuddered as they watched.

“The officers and men of the first cutter had not been idle; but ere a blade of the ashen oars could strike the water there was a rush of a tall, stalwart form across the quarter-deck, a flash of steel, and Tamba, with a bayonet snatched from the scabbard of a starched, prim, and exceedingly astonished marine, was overboard.

“The shark had sighted his prey, one stroke of his powerful tail causing him to glide through the pellucid depths of the water like a flash. The gleam of his white belly was seen as he turned to seize his victim; but Tamba had reached the all-important point in time. As the man-eater presented his side, the negro, agile and lithe almost as his fearful antagonist, dived, driving the weapon deep into the monster’s body. There was a tinge of blood, an avalanche of foam; the water was lashed into spray, through which occasional glimpses of a dark head, bloody arm, and glistening steel, and the writhing body of the shark were inextricably mixed up and but indistinctly seen.

“Merryhew was picked up by the men in the cutter, but ere he reached the deck the strange combat had terminated. Out of the deeply-dyed water, red with the life-blood of the shark, Tamba emerged, his weapon carried proudly on high as he passed over the gangway, leaving the man-eater floating motionless on the surface of the water.

“In presence of the ship’s company, Tamba was

thanked by the lieutenant for his gallantry, acknowledged as the preserver of his life, the whole circumstance entered in the log, and the negro's popularity and standing as a brave man was assured throughout the brig-of-war.

"Time passed on; the cruiser had anchored in the harbor of Goree, an inhospitable lump of rock under the tri-color of France situated some nine miles from the mainland, and Merryhew, who was fond of sporting, determined to take a look at the jungle and what it contained in the shape of game, ere the vessel took her departure on another cruise.

"Accompanied by Tamba, he landed on an unfrequented spot of the mainland; the boat returned to the vessel, while the officer plunged into the maizes of the forest, intent upon such sport as might be expected to lurk beneath the deep shadows and luxuriant foliage of an African jungle.

"It was late in the day when the two, well laden with game, came suddenly upon the borders of a vast plain of sand. Standing under a wide-spreading palm, Merryhew gazed curiously upon the scene of desolation before him, when suddenly from behind a sand dune came a puff of smoke, a report, and a musket-ball whistled in close proximity to the officer's ear. With the report came a savage yell, and a dozen horsemen, mounted upon Arabian steeds, burst suddenly forth from a mass of long, undulating serge grass, charging with headlong fury upon the two amazed, half-stupefied hunters, who, however, rapidly realized the danger they were in as they faced the cumbersome matchlocks, long, glittering spears, and dark, frowning features of the marauding Arabs

swooping down upon them with the speed and fury of a whirlwind.

“Turning their backs to the foe, the two sought safety in flight, seeking the protection afforded by the intricacies of the jungle, their paces accelerated by a rattling volley from their vindictive pursuers. At the edge of the jungle the Arabs dismounted, following the trail on foot, shouting and hallooing as they advanced.

“It made but little difference to Merryhew what direction he pursued, although he would have preferred to lessen the distance intervening between him and the ocean. Could he have communicated with his vessel, a few shells would have dispersed the blood-thirsty believers of Mahomet like dew before the sun. There was nothing to depend on but their individual strength and courage.

“The sun had nearly disappeared, as reeling with exhaustion, faint from fatigue in forcing a passage through the numerous obstacles met with at every step, the sorely-pressed officer came suddenly upon the low shelving bank of a wide creek, the sluggish current of which flowed onward, emptying into the river which found an outlet opposite to Goree. At least Merryhew reasoned that such must be the case, and groaned inwardly that there was no boat or canoe by which escape might be possible. But the vengeful cries of the agile Arabs were again echoing through the dim recesses of the mighty forest; the brief respite of rest, together with a refreshing draught of water, had somewhat revived and restored the confidence of the fugitives, who, holding their weapons upon their heads, plunged resolutely into the slimy depths of the creek, and reached the opposite bank as the leading native sprang into view.

“The dull thud of a heavy ball, as it buried itself in the trunk of a neighboring tree, aroused the ire of Merryhew, who determined that all the shooting should not be confined to the dirty, turbanned fanatics clamoring so vindictively for blood. Quick as thought his rifle was levelled, and with the report the form of a true believer measured its length amid the jungle grass. He had received his kismet, and the howls of his comrades loudly proclaimed the fact, alarming even the white-faced baboons as they trooped and chattered amid the interlacing foliage above.

“A shout from Tamba caused Merryhew to hurry forward. Waving his hand towards an open space bordering upon the creek, the negro, his eyes flashing with excitement, nostrils dilated, and quivering with agitation, called upon his master to follow. Through the deepening shadows of the coming night the sharp eye of the sailor detected a species of hut, encircled by a high stockade, firmly built, and completely defending the position. It had probably been constructed for the use of some French officer as a rude hunting lodge, the high paling serving to keep at bay wild beasts and unwelcome reptiles. It was surrounded on two sides by a heavy morass covered with thickly interwoven mangrove roots and bushes, while an arm of the creek flowed in front, and the dark approaches of the forest commanded the remaining side. Without a moment's hesitation the two entered through the narrow gateway, replaced the sharpened paling, barricaded the entrance, feeling for the time, at least, they were safe from their implacable foes. The Arabs were soon upon the scene, evincing their surprise and discomfiture at the turn affairs had taken by loud

and continued guttural cries of surprise. Rendered wary by the fate of their comrade, they kept well under cover, contenting themselves with occasionally firing a random shot at the dark outlines of the retreat where they had their prey caged.

“The sharp eyes of Tamba discovered one venturesome Arab, who, anxious for a shot, had advanced beyond his fellows. Tamba’s rifle quickly rang out, the Arab’s death shriek followed, and actuated by an uncontrollable influence, the negro leaped on to the highest point of the paling as he chanted forth his war-cry.

“The light of the Arab’s watch-fire flickered and gleamed fitfully athwart the turbid waters of the creek, affording the besieged fleeting glimpses of the surroundings as they stood on the alert, rifles in hand, not daring for an instant to relax their vigilance and watchfulness.

“A deep guttural exclamation from Tamba, coupled with an energetic grasp of the arm, was sufficient for Merryhew to glance in the direction indicated by the native. Revealed by the ruddy glare of the fire was a light canoe, moored to the opposite shore, but directly within striking distance of the Arabs, who lurked in the cover afforded by grass and underbrush.

“‘Well, you mean the canoe? What does it amount to?’ responded Merryhew, bitterly, as he wiped the moisture from his throbbing temples. ‘It might as well be in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, for all the good it is to us. Should we attempt to make a rush for it, those cursed marauders would pick us off at their leisure; and depend upon it, sharp eyes are watching every movement we make.’

“‘Tamba am warrior,’ replied the negro, proudly. ‘Him take canoe and kill desert thieves.’

“‘But what will you do with the dugout, even if you succeed in capturing it?’ demanded Merryhew.

“At that moment the dull, heavy report of a gun—a heavy piece of ordnance—was heard booming with a solemn cadence through the vast jungle. It caused a stir and considerable buzzing among the besiegers, who evidently did not understand from whence the report came. It was a signal-gun from the brig-of-war, and her commander felt something of a lump rise in his throat as he pictured the bright, cosey quarters and ward-room, together with the social circle wont to gather around the polished table of an evening. The joke and merry laugh, a snatch of familiar melody, recollections of ship-mates endeared through long years of companionship, the brig, and home,—dear old home,—were thoughts that crowded thick and fast upon the poor fellow as he stood at his post, half concealed within the sombre shadows cast by an overtowering monarch of the jungle. The sputtering report of a match-lock, and the swish of an Arab bullet as it sped past, was a grim response to the heart-yearnings of the despairing but plucky fellow.

“Rising and falling on the calm, still air, softly modulated, but with startling distinctness, floated the notes of a bugle. Merryhew understood it all. Alarmed by his prolonged absence, a searching party had been dispatched in quest of him. But amid the darkness and impenetrable gloom of the jungle, together with the mangrove bushes and towering growth of bamboo lining the banks of the stream, there was but little hope of the party discovering the entrance to the creek.

“There was considerable stir and agitation amongst the Arabs. They, too, had heard the bugle, the tones of which had no pleasant recollections for them. They coupled its notes with the nervous thrust of French sabre-bayonets, of which they stood in wholesome dread. That some decisive movement was being contemplated by the barbarians, was plain to Merryhew. He reasoned that the only hope for succor lay in communicating with the searching party. If the canoe could be gained, the plan was feasible, and Tamba was well calculated to succeed in the tactics that were required.

“The fine white teeth of the African gleamed in the flickering light, as Merryhew hastily explained to his follower what was necessary for him to accomplish.

“‘Be quick; above all, be noiseless; create no alarm, if you can avoid it. Push your way down the river; be guided by the notes of the bugle, and pilot the lads to the rescue. Good-by, and success go with you.’

“‘Me go—me come back quick,’ was the only response of the sable Hercules, as he stripped, as the sailors say, to a girtline. His rifle was leaning against the palings; a sharp glance in the direction of the lurking foe, a silent wave of his hand to Merryhew, and the native was gone.

“Hugging the earth closely, Tamba wormed himself slowly forward, keeping as far as possible under cover of every friendly shadow and projecting object. Every movement was breathlessly watched by Merryhew, who beheld the dexterous fellow glide into the turbid waters of the creek, scarcely causing a ripple to play upon its surface. His head sank beneath the almost stagnant current. At the same moment a huge crocodile floated

into the full blaze of the watch-fire. The glint of his huge jaws caused the heart of the officer to almost cease beating as he strove to follow the movements of his devoted follower. But his attention was soon centred in another direction, compelling him to exert every faculty that he remained master of.

“Urged on by the cries of their leader, three Arabs charged boldly across the open space lying between the hut and border of the jungle, covered by a scattering volley from those remaining under cover. One tall fellow leaped convulsively into the air, a victim to Merryhew’s marksmanship, ere half of the space had been covered. But the other two plunged forward; the second shot from the lieutenant’s rifle proved abortive. The paling was all but gained when the clear ringing tones of some strange and barbarous war-cry echoed with startling distinctness and effect through the recesses of the gloomy jungle.

“Struck with consternation, and badly demoralized by the unlooked-for demonstration, the two Arabs abandoned the attack, darting back to cover, while Merryhew, as he reloaded his weapons, noticed that the canoe had vanished. It was the faithful black who had pealed forth his sonorous shout of battle, as he plied the paddle with dexterous skill and strength. It was a fortunate diversion for the holder of the hut.

“With both rifles ready at hand, the lieutenant watched narrowly for the next demonstration on the part of the foe. An unbroken stillness reigned amid the vast solitude, the weary watcher straining his ear in vain to catch a shout or cheery bugle-note from the searching-party. Suddenly he was aroused by the distant “hurrah” of a

pack of jackals which appeared to break the charm of quietude, the entire jungle becoming alive, as it were, with a multitude of unearthly sounds of birds and beasts assailing his ear. He recognized the purring of the peewit plover, the cry of an awakened peacock, the solitary cry of a beast of prey, and the shrill trumpeting of an elephant as he crashed through the undergrowth.

“A flash of scintillating light darted through the heavy, poisonous atmosphere; a second and a third fiery messenger skimmed through the air, revealing to Merryhew the new mode of attack adopted by his savage foes. The rascals were shooting lighted chips of bamboo at the dry thatch of the hut, which was soon in a blaze. Against the inroads of this enemy, Merryhew was powerless to struggle. Above the snapping and crackling of the rapidly-spreading flames, the deep exultant cries of the Arabs reached him, as they crept stealthily closer, forward, keenly on the *qui vive* for the final rush and desperate charge of the Christian dogs whose lives they had sworn to have.

“The smoke and heat were becoming unbearable; the poor fellow had retreated to the best cover remaining to him, clinging desperately to the rifles, determined to sell his life as dearly as possible. Once in a while his thoughts would wander to the searching-party, to Tamba, and the efforts that resolute fellow was making to save his life. He had but faint hopes the negro would succeed in the face of so many obstacles and an almost impenetrable darkness, but he groaned aloud in his anguish of heart as his face all but blistered in the fierce heat.

““Bear a hand, Tamba, bear a hand, my lad; bring up the blue jackets, or the old brig will soon require an-

other commander. Flesh and blood cannot stand this ; better die outside, fighting like a man.'

"Fumbling through the smoke for the entrance, he commenced tearing down the palings, having determined to make a rush for the creek, brave the fire of the remaining Arabs, with a view of gaining cover in the jungle until help from the party arrived.

"A yell of alarm, a wild hurrah, with a hoarse shout of Tamba echoing above all, and a score of athletic, nimble tars dashed impetuously through mud and water, across mangrove roots and over the open ground, their arms and accoutrements flashing in the blaze of the burning hut.

"In the midst of the excitement, with the din of the *mêlée*, sweet music to his untutored ears, Tamba, who had found and unerringly led the rescuing party to the scene, was busy working his way over the burning débris of the hunting resort. He found his master in a dead faint, badly used up, overcome by the heat, smoke, and excitement, but a dash of water, with plenty of fresh air, soon brought him around.

"As for the Arabs, not one of the party was captured, or even seen, by the enraged sailors. It would have been a short shrift for them ; for the blood of the men had been aroused from the treatment that had been received by Merryhew at their hands, and they were wild for revenge. But like shadows that melt and fade into air, the dusky, ferocious denizens of the desert vanished, plunging into the recesses of the jungle, with scarcely a sound to betray their presence.

"All felt relieved as a final farewell was bid to the scene of the adventure. The march to the beach was a trifle difficult, but their hearts were light, and the lieutenant

had the assistance of Tamba's sinewy arms. A sigh of relief escaped from the officer's lips as he reclined in the stern-sheets of the fleet-pulling cutter, and the brig-of-war was reached as the first rays of the gleaming sun gilded the burnished trucks of the vessel.

"Shortly afterwards the old craft received orders to return to the United States. Merryhew offered to land Tamba, laden with rewards such as were well calculated to gladden the heart of a simple-minded African. But he refused absolutely to part from his benefactor.

"'You warrior,' he said; 'me warrior too. We go together,' and they have been together, side by side, sharing danger and pleasures, shadow and sunshine, with all the ups and downs that are common to the careers of brothers of the sword.

"But—ah, yes, there he is,—Merryhew in person, broad-shouldered, sunburnt,—good-natured fellow as ever existed. We will all have dinner together, for you must meet my friend, and in meeting him you will be sure to come in contact with Tamba, who is never, under any circumstances, far distant from the man he worships."

WOBBERTS.

JUST where he came from, who he was, and what he was, no man in the whole garrison could accurately tell. A milder-mannered, more spiritless and inoffensive creature, apparently, had never appeared in the uniform of a cavalry trooper. He joined us with a batch of re-

cruits from the far East, sent to fill the gaps torn in our column by an Indian campaign of unusual severity and duration, and from the very moment of his arrival, sufferant and unprotesting, took his place as the butt of the entire troop to which he was assigned. Nothing he could do by any possibility seemed to be right. Nothing he could say, on the contrary, could by any means go wrong, for in very truth he said nothing at all. Playing on his unsophistication and ignorance, the men seemed tireless in the pastime of "putting up a job on Robberts." He would blush with mortification, or, possibly, only with embarrassment, at being the centre of observation and public remark. He would wait for a moment, awkward and sorrowful, when the climax was reached, and, amidst the laughter and jeers of a swarm of sun-burnt troopers, he stood revealed as the hero of some new piece of military absurdity in which he was designedly entrapped, and then would slink silently away, lifting his hand to his mouth, in a gesture at once deprecatory and apologetic, and wander out on the open prairie or down into the valley of the stream, never by any human possibility appealing for sympathy, never under any circumstances showing the faintest inclination to resent.

And yet this lack of self-assertion arose from no apparent physical defect. Robberts had been marked from the very first by the trimness of his figure and the somewhat refined cast of his features. He had great, dark, pathetic eyes,—eyes that had a pleading, yet hopeless look about them at times. He had well-shaped, slender hands, and a delicate mouth under the curling brown mustache, yet there was a strength and sinew in his build and a general "set up" that hinted at possibility for self-

defense of which his tormentors seemed to think him destitute. His language, when he spoke at all, was in low, hesitant tone, but the few words were those of a man of education, and of a higher social plane than was to be expected in the rank and file. His signature attached to his enlistment papers and the clothing receipt-book was one that warranted the response of "clerk" to the query of the recruiting officer as to his occupation. In other respects, however, his replies to that functionary had not been as free from criticism. He had given his name as John Robberts, and so spelled it. He had pronounced himself thirty years of age at date of enlistment, and had accredited to a bustling, booming Western town the honor of his birthplace. That he had herein been guilty of a glaring anachronism was a matter that escaped the attention of an official as far from the scene of action to which his recruit was to be called as he was "away off" in his own geography. Robberts might well be thirty years of age; he looked it; but if so he could not have been born in a town whose first stake was only driven in 1859, for this was the Centennial year.

It was the regimental quartermaster who first called attention to this discrepancy in Robberts's official account of himself, but by the time the discovery was made the garrison had ceased to care whether Robberts was born in Sioux City or Samaria. He was the source of untold entertainment to a prairie populace of some six hundred souls, and the fact that he had lied about the date and place of his nativity could not invalidate the fact of his formal enlistment. Indeed, by this time the quartermaster himself would have deeply lamented any

action on his part which might have led to the loss of Robberts. The man had proved valuable as a clerk and accountant, and in two months from his arrival at the frontier fort was the possessor of a comfortable berth in the office, a place on the extra-duty pay-roll, and a new and universally accepted name.

An old English soldier was the quartermaster, a man who had come from the mother-country in youthful days; had enlisted forthwith in the United States army, and before he had worn the Yankee troopers' dress a week was believed to have deserted from Her Britannic Majesty's Dragoon Guards. That, however, was nobody's business but his own, and whatever he may have been in his own country, the Briton proved faithful under the stars and stripes, won his chevrons in short order, won promotion to the rank and pay of sergeant in less than a year; won the pay of more than a dozen sergeants in much less time, but that was in the exercise of talents which, while they might have been professional, were not necessarily martial. He invested his savings—and the losings of his associates—in real estate and paid the taxes out of the same fund. The outbreak of the war came at a time when the government needed officers, and so appointed a large number from the ranks, among them the Briton. He served his adopted country well wherever he could get a berth at disbursing, recruiting, or commissary duty, but avoided the dangers and dissipations of the field. He was in his element as a garrison quartermaster and happy in that position in 1876, perfectly content with the world which had so abundantly rewarded his thrifty habits, and taking huge comfort in his home and household. As he advanced

in years the quartermaster became more and more ceremonious and precise in manner. He dressed with infinite care, and endeavored by every means in the power of his tailor to correct those ravages of time which are apparent in expansions below the belt. He was growing deaf, which he declined to admit. He was growing irritable, which he flatly denied. He had always been the victim of a vocal or lingual impediment which made him hate the letter "r" as much as the oyster is supposed to love it. Earnestly he strove to conceal the defect. He so ordered the conversation of his daily life that only through circumstances over which he had no control did the letter "r" appear in any word he used. He could sometimes manage to glide over the difficulty when the letter appeared in mid-word, so to speak, but when a name began with "r" the quartermaster availed himself of any dodge before he would attempt it. His distress when Royston took command of the regiment was something pathetic but short-lived, for Royston—worse luck for us—was promoted before his leaves turned copper-color through the frosting silver. He had old Sergeant Harriman relieved from duty in the quartermaster's department for no other reason than that he simply could not pronounce his name without somebody's snickering, and nothing but the fact that he was in sore straits for a clerk would have induced him to accept the services of this shy, silent new-comer. He wanted to send him back the moment he heard his name; but the colonel told him flatly it was Robberts or nobody, and the quartermaster surrendered.

And yet within a week he declared the man invaluable; he wrote a beautiful hand, was quick and accurate

at figures, and was highly intelligent,—evidently a man of education.

And now, given a sunshiny corner in the storehouse office, with no one to badger or annoy, no one to ridicule, no restive horses to groom with numbed and unaccustomed fingers, no squad drill and rasping corporals, no bucking steeds and aching bones; given presently a little bunk of his own to sleep in there at the office, and an hour or two in which to amuse himself during the late afternoon, Robberts began to pick up flesh and color. It was then that he seemed to be “taking notice” for the first time, and then that others besides the rough troopers began to take notice of him. His hours of labor were over at four P.M., just about the time the entire force of officers and men would be wending its way down to the stables; and on pleasant days the entire array of garrison children would be frolicking about the band-stand on the parade, while their mammas were sauntering from piazza to piazza making calls, or, bowered under their own sparse vine and fig-tree, entertaining visitors from the post or from town. It was then that the solitary form of the shy, brown-eyed recruit would be noted wandering off across the prairie, his well-knit frame silhouetted against the low horizon,—a dreamy, dawdling, aimless sort of object, despite the soldier dress, which fitted him so singularly well. The nurse-maid at the surgeon’s quarters, indeed, the doctor’s pretty wife herself, were not slow to observe how regularly he came sauntering forth, all alone, and, strolling away from the busy haunts of men, away from the trails or bridle-paths where he might be apt to have to greet some one, away among the tiny mounds of the

prairie-dog village, whose yelping sentries became at last so accustomed to his harmless invasion of their guarded land that they no longer cared to dive into their burrows, but, perched on their hind legs, kept up their querulous bark and challenge as though demanding of him some sign of interest or curiosity. Cosette, Mrs. Doctor Pease's trim nurse-maid, was soon so much interested in the movements of the shy stranger with the pathetic brown eyes that she had taken to trundling her little charges out on the prairie at the very time that it was his wont to issue forth; and no sooner did Robberts become aware of this piece of feminine strategy than he gained the northward prairie by a still wider *détour*, and Mrs. Pease was compelled to forbid Cosette's going out so far. By this time Robberts was known as "the hermit." He sought no associates, made no friends, shrank from all companionship, ate, when he could, alone, slept alone, lived alone, worked as much as possible alone. Never, by any chance, did he enter the garrison proper; never was he seen among the little group of extra-duty men in some sunny corner on the bright spring mornings, watching parade or guard-mounting. Never did he ask for or receive letters from anybody. If Robberts sought a favor from man or woman, it seemed only this—to be let alone.

Quartermaster-Sergeant Owen was a man with an eye to the main chance. He was quick to note Robberts's industry and capacity, quick to add new tasks to the work cut out for him, and to discover that, no matter how intricate might be the form or paper required, a few minutes' silent study made the new clerk master of it. He rarely asked a question; he never laughed; it was

long before any one even saw him smile. Owen got to loading Robberts's desk with papers which it was his own business to make out, and then to telling the quartermaster that Robberts merely copied the originals, which was a lie that the quartermaster was not long in finding out. It did not much lower Owen in his regard, but it raised Robberts; and little by little the quartermaster got to giving his instructions direct to the clerk, instead of transmitting them through the sergeant. When no officers were around and he thought himself unheard except by two or three clerks, it was the quartermaster's habit to summon him himself, possibly for practice, as Demosthenes used to make his speeches with a mouthful of pebbles. Manfully did he strive to master that obstreperous "r." Throwing himself back in his chair, fixing his eyes on the top rail of his desk, concentrating every energy on the attempt, he would suddenly give voice to something like this:

"R-r-r-r-r-Wobbuts!"

Magnificent as a beginning, lamentably abortive as a conclusion. There would be heard a smothered laugh behind the board partition where the clerks sat, whereupon the red features of the quartermaster would wax redder, and then "Wobbuts" would come silently to the door and await his superior's directions.

For three weeks nearly was the old quartermaster happy in the possession of this paragon of a clerk who never spoke, never scratched, never blotted, never blurred, never smoked, chewed, drank, gambled, swore, or sulked, and then came pay-day and disillusion—"Wobbuts" was gone.

"Hi say," shouted the frolicsome trumpeter of "B"

Troop, poking his head into the company quarters the day after the distribution of funds, "hany of you fellows seen hanythink of Wobbuts, you know? Hit's old Beef and Beer what wants 'im."

But nobody had. Together with the men of his troop he had marched to the pay-table, had silently taken the little packet of greenbacks and silver handed out to him by the paymaster; had attempted to bolt out of the wrong door and stumbled over a chair, turning crimson with confusion when the sergeant shouted, "This way, Robberts!"; had thrust the money without counting it into a side pocket and walked straight away towards the office. Stout Mrs. Malone, the veteran laundress of Troop "B," stood at the door of her hospitable little hut for an hour that afternoon, according to her custom, welcoming each man by name as he came down the hill to pay his little wash bill. Etiquette on that point was precise in "B" Troop in those days: not a drink, not a diversion, until Mrs. Malone was "squared," and that genial amazon hailed each new arrival.

"Good-day to ye, Mr. Boland. Sure your mother would be proud of the red in them cheeks. The compliments of the sason to ye, Sergeant Moriarity. Sure the new chiverones is beautiful. Walk right in, gintlemen! You'll find Mick and a fine bowl at the table."

Honest woman! She had the hoith of "B" Troop's custom and kept it, and the "byes," as she lovingly called them, rarely, if ever, failed to pay their visit and first dollar to her, then to step inside her humble roof, remove the forage-cap, and duck the head as they drank her health in little cups of fiery punch which Mick dispensed with lavish hands. Half an hour after the arrival

of the first man her list of some thirty names was checked off as paid, with a single exception,—Robberts.

“It’s that good-looking recruit in the quartermaster’s, Mick,” she said; “why ain’t he come. Sure he don’t look like a dhrinking man.”

“Oh, he’s nawthin’,” answered Mick, with a trooper’s high disdain of a mere scrivener. “He’s gone to the office again, and doesn’t know the rules of genteel and polite society. I’ll remind him after stables,” he said, as the trumpets sounded their lively call, and the men in their white frocks and overalls came pouring forth from the barracks up the slope.

But there was no need. Mrs. Malone was counting over her gains after a quiet sip or two of the punch. The long white columns had tramped on down to the stables, and then a solitary soldier came and tapped shyly at the door.

“It’s you, is it, Misther Robberts? Welcome in, sir. Sure we missed you when the troop was all here. Take the gentleman’s cap, Norah, and give him your own tay-cup, child.” And Norah, a seventeen-year-old sprig of the sod, bustled, blushing, from the low stool where she was paring potatoes, and wiped the chair with her apron and looked shyly up into the dark, pathetic eyes of the tall young trooper in the door-way. But Robberts reddened back to his very ears.

“I can’t,” he said, with a deprecatory motion of the hand. “I just came to—oh, here’s the money!” he broke off suddenly, laid a little stack of coin on the table, and vanished.

No one saw Robberts for forty-eight hours after that, and then old Blue Peter, who lived at the half-way house,

so-called, drove out with a limp burden in his cart, and dumped it on the guard-house porch. It was Robberts, dead drunk.

It took four days after this episode before Robberts was well enough to go to work again. They had to take him into the hospital, so keen were his sufferings on coming to. The quartermaster gravely told him he had begged him off from court-martial and punishment this time, as it was the first offense; but he must be on his guard in the future. Robberts was all penitence, though he made no protest. He assented by implication only to the suggestion that it was indeed a first offense. He knew nothing whatever that had happened. He only had some twelve dollars after paying the laundress and tailor, and it was gone to the last cent. Peter said he had been sleeping in the ditch near his place for nearly twenty-four hours.

In two weeks more the quartermaster paid off the extra-duty men. Robberts silently took his ten dollars, and this time he was found in the creek valley half-way to town with an empty whiskey bottle by his side and the cattle browsing peacefully about him. Then he lasted six weeks more, diligent, silent, devoted to his work, and, on one or two rare occasions, was even heard singing softly to himself. Then came the paymaster's next visit.

"Mind you now, Wobbuts, if you're drunk this time, it's all up wid ye," said Sergeant Owen. And Robberts flushed, but made no reply.

Some twenty dollars were handed to him by the paymaster. He marched away without a word to any one, slunk down to Mrs. Malone's, placed her money on the window-sill with a shy bow, and disappeared.

That night four or five jovial troopers, in town on pass, burst in at the Alhambra, and there, seated all by himself at a little table close to the orchestrion, beating maudlin time to the strains of *The Beautiful Blue Danube*, with glazed and vacant eyes, but in a perfectly immaculate new white shirt which his blouse was thrown open to display, was Robberts. They accosted him with good-natured raillery, but he did not know them. He seemed utterly engrossed in the music of the wheezy, clanging old instrument, several of whose pipes were perforated by the bullets of jocular practitioners, and whose finer chords were long since cracked out of all harmony. He was singing away in a voice really sweet, despite its drunken drone. He paid no attention to them, refused to leave with them, and eventually retired for the night upon the sanded floor beneath the table. A patrol from the post brought him back with other recalcitrants, and poor Robberts had a fit of the horrors in the guard-house ; was tried by court-martial afterwards and sentenced to fine, but again the quartermaster needed and pleaded for him. He was back at his desk at the end of the week, and back at the Alhambra on the following Sunday, having pawned his white shirt for the means to revisit that confounded orchestrion. Once more was he landed in the guard-house ; once more was he tried, fined, and released ; once more the extra-duty pay furnished him funds for another raid to town ; and this time he was gone two days and nights before recapture, and the colonel ordered him returned to his troop for duty as soon as he had served out his time in the guard-house.

A whole week poor Robberts plodded about the post

in rear of the police-cart, carrying wood and cleaning up the back yards, and the expression in his eyes was something that haunted all who saw them. He had come to the last day of his incarceration and had staggered into the doctor's shed with a big load of fire-wood, when the doctor's little girl, watching him wistfully from the kitchen door, said to Cosette,—

“Oh, he's cut his hand!” And so he had, or, accidentally, a clumsy comrade had done it for him.

Now Cosette was a timorous creature, one whom the sight of blood, or a mouse, made deathly sick. It was the doctor's wife herself who came out in answer to Flossy's tearful announcement that “Poor Wobberts had cut himself and was all blood.” Robberts by this time was pleading with the sentry to let him go over to the hospital just a minute. “On my word,” he said, “I'll come right back as soon as this is stanced.” But the sentry was a raw German youth who knew nothing outside of his orders. He had three prisoners in charge, and he couldn't let one of them go. Next, Robberts's face was almost as red as the stream now dripping from the wound, for Mrs. Pease had unhesitatingly stepped into the back yard, linen bandages in hand, and had accosted him :

“Robberts, my poor fellow, how did you get such a cut? Come here to the pump, instantly.” And Robberts obeyed. In another moment she had sent Cosette to the steward for lint, and then had carefully washed the gaping cut in cool water; had drawn the lips together and fastened them in place with adhesive plaster; had dressed, bandaged and then slung the injured hand, while the sentinel and the man whose awkward act had

made the gash stood stupidly by. And then she looked in the face, so flushed a moment ago, and saw that he was now deathly white, his eyes closing. Making him sit down, she ran into the house. When she came out the sentry had handed him a big dipper of water; but she held a glass brimming with sherry.

“Drink this, my poor fellow,” she said; “you are faint, and I don’t wonder.—Here, you hold it for him, Flossy, dear, while I call Cosette and send her for papa.”

But when Mrs. Pease came back the wine stood in the glass untasted, and Robberts was leaning against the gate-post a dozen yards away, still white and faint. Flossy was half ready to cry.

“He wouldn’t touch it, mamma. He said, ‘No, no,’ and began to cry, and then he put his other arm round me and kissed me and said he had a little sister once, and then he heard you coming and he hurried over there.”

Presently Pease came in,—a burly, kindly fellow,—and took Robberts, sentry, prisoners, and all over to the dispensary, and then a whole week Robberts was kept in the hospital, for the surgeon said he couldn’t go to duty with that hand, and his ten days in the guard-house had expired. A whole week of clean, airy room, of blessed quiet, free from the torment and racket of the barracks, or the shameful degradation of the guard-house cells; a whole week in which to rest and read and stroll out on the sunshiny prairie, and gather little nosegays of the wild prairie flowers, and, on his homeward way, shyly to hand them to little Flossy, who was sure to be playing about the gate. Once he came suddenly upon Mrs. Pease herself, and turned red as fire, and a big lump

rose in his throat, and the big brown eyes grew troubled and humid; and he took off his forage-cap, and then quickly clapped it on again, as though wondering had he a right to bow to a lady, and then he scudded away, forgetting the flowers that he had dropped.

And then his hand healed and they sent him back to barracks, and once more the misery of the rough troop-life began again; only when the day was done, only after dark now, could he come wandering out upon the prairie; but there was no little Flossy to be seen then.

The captain of "B" Troop had good reason to pride himself on the general efficiency and discipline of his men; but he sometimes made mistakes.

"Don't give that fellow Robberts a chance to get drunk this time, sergeant," he said, when the paymaster's coming was again announced. "There won't be more than ten dollars due him,—all the rest is gone in fines. Just clap him into the guard-house as soon as he misses a single roll-call." It was done; and when Robberts was released the next day he marched straight down to the stables instead of to the quarters; was dragged out from under the hay-stacks at four o'clock, drunk as a lord; was carried up to the guard-house in the police cart; suffered, heaven only knows what agony in the reaction that set in, and was ordered by Captain Buxton, officer of the day, into the cells while he was still in desperate shape. Lieutenant Blake, who relieved Buxton next morning, heard moaning in the cell-room, had poor Robberts brought to light and promptly trundled over to Pease at the hospital, who told Buxton he had wellnigh killed the man, which did Pease good, but was a bad thing for Robberts, as it made Buxton hate him;

and when Buxton got down on a man, officer or soldier, he could make it hot for him somehow, and generally managed to do it. A coarse-moulded, loud-voiced, harsh-mannered man was Buxton, whom nobody liked; but he was one of the senior captains and had power.

When Robberts came out of hospital this time and was sent back to the troop he had not a cent of money, and had to serve several days at hard labor again. He implored the sergeant not to send him around the officers' yards, but to put him at anything else, and the sergeant did his best for the poor fellow. Then they took him into the troop office, where help was needed on the muster-rolls, and here, with no money to spend on whiskey, and lots of congenial work to do, Robberts again seemed to be behaving well. He was so accurate and helpful in all the papers that the first sergeant wondered that they had never tried him before.

"Just keep straight next pay-day, Robberts, and I'll get you on permanent daily duty," he said. And Robberts turned red, but made no reply. He had only five or ten dollars coming to him this time, and the weather was getting bitter cold now, and the days were short and dark. He got his money just before stable-call; paid Mrs. Malone her little bill; dodged the invitation to sip her punch; was present at retreat roll-call and supper, but absent at tattoo.

Three days passed. Not a sign had been seen of Robberts. The blankets were gone from his bunk. The patrols could find nothing of him in town and hear nothing of him anywhere. Old Blue Peter confessed that he had sold him two bottles of whiskey, a loaf of rye bread, and a pound of cheese pay-day night, with

which he had gone he knew not where. Just as the sergeants were forming their companies for stable duty on the afternoon of the third day there was the most unauthorized burst of merriment from "B" Troop, loud and long continued. An odd-looking bundle was seen working itself out into the light through an old trap or opening leading into the dry, dark, and empty space between the flooring and the ground at the gable end of the company quarters. First a gray blanket or two was shoved through, and then, dishevelled, dirty, unkempt, but only half drunk, Robberts crawled forth into the light; staggered to his feet, stood swaying a moment, listening with maudlin dejection to the derisive shouts with which he was greeted, and then with the same old gesture, raising one hand to his weak mouth and giving a deprecatory wave with the other, he started to shamle off behind the barracks, but was intercepted by a quick leap of the young lieutenant who suddenly appeared.

"Send this man to the guard-house at once, sergeant. Gather up those things of his, some of you."

And now, for the first time in his history, poor Robberts gave tongue. Wringing his hands, bursting into tears, in piteous accents he pleaded,—

"Not to the guard-house, lieutenant; please don't; oh, please don't. I'll die there. I'm all broken, sir. I'm only a poor broken-down fellow that never harmed man or woman, but myself. Let me off this time, for God's sake do, and I'll give no more trouble. I'll get my discharge, sir; I can do it any time. Don't send me to the guard-house, please, and you won't regret it, sir. I promise it—I promise it—*on the honor of a gentleman.*"

The din and laughter and fun had stopped. A strange hush had come suddenly over the crowd of rugged troopers,—none really unkind, yet none exactly sympathetic. There swayed poor Robberts, wringing his dirty hands, tears streaming down the grimy checks, the once handsome, pathetic brown eyes all bleared and swollen; and there before him stood the precise young soldier, with his pale, clear-cut, intellectual face, every item of his attire so trim and neat, every movement so brisk and military. Yet now he stood speechless and disarmed. For a moment more no one spoke. The lieutenant's outstretched hand fell slowly to his side, and at last, slowly, he said,—

“Upon my soul, Robberts, I don't know what to make of you. I've a half a mind to take you at your word.”

It was just then that Buxton came shouldering his way through the crowd, roughly ordering the men to stand back.

“Got that damned, worthless drunkard here again, have you?” he exclaimed. “If he was in my troop, I'd straighten him out or kill him, one of the two.”

“Be kind enough to let me attend to this matter, as it is not your troop, Buxton,” was heard at this juncture, in the placid tones of Captain Raymond. “Sergeant, form your men. Mr. Dana, I will look after Robberts.”

And, not sorry to have the matter thus disposed of, the lieutenant touched his cap and sprang away.

Just what argument Raymond brought to bear with the chief we did not hear; but Robberts was not sent to the guard-house until sobered up by the doctor and ready for trial. Captain Buxton, however, came in for a rasping from the colonel, who invited him in pointed

terms to pay a little more attention to the affairs of his own troop and a little less to those of the other captains, whereat "Bux." was simply furious, but had to swallow it. Then, as the charges accumulated against Robberts were now of dimensions that required the action of a larger tribunal, they were referred by the judge-advocate of the department to a general court just convened, of which Captain Buxton was president; and great was the president's wrath when the prisoner in low tone, but with decided emphasis, announced that he objected to being tried by Captain Buxton, because of "bias, prejudice, and threatening language on several occasions." He was still more wrathful when the court almost instantly sustained the objection, and he was excused from service on the case. And then, while the proceedings were being reviewed at department head-quarters, there came sudden orders which took four companies into the field in pursuit of a wily and desperate band of Cheyennes. It was an awful winter; storms, blizzards, and cold waves came in quick succession. There were some men who protested they couldn't go, and one was Buxton, and were excused by the surgeon. There was one trooper awaiting sentence in the guard-house who begged that he might go, and that was Robberts. The colonel told Raymond to take him anyhow, and telegraphed his action to Omaha. Four months were they gone, and Stannard's battalion never had a tougher trip. Dozens of men were frozen; scores of horses perished; and in the one sharp fight they had—fought out in the teeth of a driving storm—the Cheyennes got rather the best of it. Only some dozen men of Raymond's troop could push ahead in pursuit that night, but Robberts was one. Only

half of that dozen came back at the end of the campaign. Three were killed, three left wounded in hospital up near the Sioux agency, and one of these latter was Robberts—shot through the left side when riding back with despatches. “The worst thing about it all was,” said jovial old Captain Miles, “that we never got a drink of whiskey the whole trip.” It was desolation to Miles, but the making of Robberts. Raymond had made him corporal after the fight, and intimated that he could look higher as soon as he rejoined at Russell.

It was a bitter day in March when Robberts finally reappeared at the post. He looked gaunt and thin, but a very different man. Now the brown eyes had a frank, fearless way of gazing straight into other people’s, as though he would say, “I’m quite your equal.” He had won the respect of Stannard’s whole command by his conduct on the campaign. He had been just as silent and undemonstrative as ever, but ready for any duty, no matter how perilous, and had gone about it in a way that at first gave rise to the suspicion that he had no sense of danger at all. As Sergeant Murphy expressed it, “He doesn’t know enough about the business to be afraid.” But when they came upon the gashed and mutilated bodies of women and children, slaughtered by the Indians in their rush, men who saw Robberts’s face concluded that he understood more than they thought. From that time he was eager to join every pursuing party, eager for a place on every scout. He was perhaps the only man who didn’t cheer and yell like mad the day they stormed the Cheyenne village; but he was ever with the foremost line, silent, vengeful, with burning eyes and compressed lips. They had simply to

drag him back when it was found that the Indians were intrenched in a position too strong to be carried by assault.

And now an odd problem presented itself. Here was a man wearing the chevrons of a corporal, awarded him for gallant conduct in a fierce campaign, wounded and much respected, and here were orders from department head-quarters sentencing him to two weeks' hard labor in charge of the guard, and a fine of thirty dollars. The command was paid off just about as he came in, and Captain Raymond had positively blushed when he notified Corporal Robberts that there was hardly any money coming to him. Robberts blushed, too, but saluted and said,—

“It doesn't matter,” which astonished everybody. As to the rest of the sentence, the colonel wrote to Omaha and got it remitted.

Then, as Robberts could not go on duty yet and had much time to himself, it was observed that he resumed his solitary strolls on the prairie. It was also observed that letters now came regularly from an Eastern city in a very pretty and lady-like hand. It was observed that about once a week Robberts got permission to ride in town with the lumbering old garrison stage-coach, and that he deposited his letters in the post-office box himself. This was considered by some people at the post as taking a mean advantage.

We were having good fun just then at an improvised skating-rink down the valley. The stream had been dammed and a space of some six acres flooded and frozen. Every afternoon the children were out in force, and in the evening the officers and ladies had their turn.

Cosette was a French Canadian, and could outskate any woman at the post, and every afternoon she was the centre of attraction at the pond and the object of no little envious comment from the other nurse-maids. The girl could not help showing off her accomplishments, and, as she was rather pretty, decidedly graceful, and had a nice foot and ankle, it rather drove the other women off the ice. They could see no fun in that sort of thing, and strove to interest their charges in something else. But it was a new toy, popular among the officers and ladies, and so the children were determined. Flossy was rapidly learning to skate under so skilled a teacher. Pease was a devoted believer in outdoor life, and Cosette was allowed her way. For a time Robberts steered clear of the bluffs overlooking the pond; but presently there came a thaw, a rain, another freeze, a new sheet of ice and more magnificent skating than ever, only the ice was pronounced thin and dangerous near the dam and over the deep part of the pond. The quartermaster had a danger-pole put there, and everybody kept away but Cosette. Cosette revelled in the perilous joy of skating over that thin sheet at full speed, especially now that she saw that Corporal Robberts, company clerk, was looking on. In vain people warned. Cosette would take lessons from nobody. She preferred a cold bath to caution; and one afternoon she got it. There was a crack and then a splash, a stifled scream, and Cosette had disappeared in a whirl of black, troubled water. She bobbed up in a minute, gasping, and clutching at the nearest ice, which, of course, broke and let her down again, and by this time most of the other nurse-maids and children were scurrying screaming away,—all but

little Floss. With an impulse of affection and heroism beyond her years, the child had made a rush as though to save her nurse, and reached the verge just in time to be tumbled in with the second break. Three or four soldiers, who happened to be looking on at the upper end of the pond, ran to the hay-stack fence for a heavy plank. One or two ladies whose children were out of danger promptly fainted. A carriage-load of officers driving back from town seemed to divine that something was wrong and came lashing across the prairie. But Robberts had charged down the bluff straight as a dart; had plunged into the icy pool with a prodigious splash, and in another moment reappeared with Flossy in his arms. A few vigorous kicks brought him and his terror-stricken little friend across the pool to a point where the ice was solid, and here, somehow, he managed to toss her out upon the surface, where she was picked up by the men who came running to the scene, and then bundled into the buffalo-ropes dragged from the carriage by four or five lively young officers, who lent a hand in helping land the next victim; and with chattering teeth and clattering tongue, Cosette was hauled ashore from Robberts's dripping arms. The driver was bidden to rush them post-haste to the doctor's quarters, and then everybody clustered around Robberts, who with blue lips and shivering limbs seemed mutely striving to decline all aid, and to make a break for home and dry clothes.

It was just at this instant that Captain Buxton burst upon the group, and then occurred a conversation that was told all over the post inside of an hour, and is one of the traditions yet.

"I saw it," said he. "I saw the whole thing, though I was too far away to help. My God, Robberts! if it was any other man in the garrison but you, I'd offer him a drink." Two of the lieutenants whirled away in disgust,—and whirled about again in amaze, for the chatter of his teeth seemed suddenly to cease. It was through them, firmly clinched, that Robberts replied,—

"And by God, sir, if any other man but you was to offer it, I'd take it."

Buxton, it was said, actually thought Robberts ought to be court-martialed for insubordination, but some of the clerks who overheard the colloquy between him and the colonel on the subject, swore delightedly that the "old man" told him he was served perfectly right.

It was Mrs. Pease now who was Robberts's most devoted nurse in the two or three days the surgeon made him stay in hospital after this episode. Captain Raymond came around to tell him he would be made sergeant in another year if he continued in well-doing. But Robberts smiled and shook his head. Pressed for an explanation, he said he didn't think he would remain in the service very long, and Raymond, though a kind fellow, felt that his authority was being a little trespassed upon. He didn't see how one of the men could be discharged without his knowledge and consent.

And yet he was. The colonel had recommended that a medal of honor be awarded two of the non-commissioned officers of Stannard's command, and Robberts was one of them. These reached the post early in June, and the colonel ordered the whole command, equipped for field service as it was and just going out for the summer, to form line on the broad parade; but that

very afternoon there came a telegraphic order something to this effect: "Corporal John Robberts, Troop 'B,' will not take the field with the battalion. Discharge orders by mail." And though Robberts appeared, covered with blushes and confusion, and had his medal pinned on his breast by the colonel himself, he went off and hid somewhere that evening, and only turned up in time to say a shy good-by to some few of the men to whom he had begun to take a fancy. The post-adjutant sent for him the next afternoon, showed him the order that had arrived by mail and his final statements.

"I'm sorry there's so little money due you, Robberts," he said. "I fancy your home is far away and you may need help to get there."

"Thank you, sir, I don't need money," he said. Then he stumbled and hesitated. "Can I go now, sir?" he finally managed to ask.

And that evening, as Cosette was trundling the baby home in the carriage and levelling shrill and voluble expostulations at the older children, who should suddenly step out from the fence corner, seize little Flossy in his arms and kiss her tenderly half a dozen times, but Robberts? And then, setting her down without a word to the others, he hastened away. Cosette rebuked her charge and reported the affair with native asperity and exaggeration to her mistress. But what angered Cosette was the fact that it was Flossy, not she, who received this parting salute.

No one saw Robberts off, no one knew when or which way he went. It was reported that he lay around town drunk for three days, but the report proved utterly untrue. He did not even drop in at the Alhambra.

Then an odd thing happened. Flossy's birthday came on the 17th of the month, and on the 16th there reached the post one of the most wonderful dolls ever seen, with several costumes in miniature steamer trunks, all packed in one big box and expressed from Chicago,—a beautiful and costly present, attributed at first to a certain wealthy aunt of Mrs. Pease, but in two weeks came her denial. Then, Lieutenant Dana received a pair of fine field-glasses, and next, Captain Raymond a box of the choicest cigars. No explanation with either. And when Christmas came there were some lovely gifts for the quartermaster's daughters, as well as another beautiful remembrance for Flossy. Then people began to wonder if the mysterious Robberts had not come into a fortune, and, like a second "Coal-Oil Johnny," was bent on giving it away. Influence there certainly must have been among his people, for the order for his discharge had come direct from the office of the Secretary of War; but no one could tell anything about him; no one knew where he had gone or what had become of him; and in the course of another year most people had ceased to think about "Wobberts" at all.

Two years after the Cheyenne raid, Doctor Pease was transferred to a pleasant station on the Atlantic seaboard, and very frequently Mrs. Pease and Flossy were enabled to spend the day with him in the city, visiting objects of interest, attending the *matinée*, etc.; and one bright April evening, as the huge ferry-boat was plowing its way through the dark waters and bearing its load of passengers to the waiting trains on the farther shore, Flossy became suddenly interested in the movements of a rather tall, stylishly dressed, well-built man, who was

attending a very pretty girl, yet not a very young one. She had a sweet face, but one on which care and sorrow had left their records in the past, howsoever placid it might be now. They were standing near the bows of the boat when Flossy first caught sight of them; but a sudden flurry of rain drove them back for shelter, and as they came towards the doctor's party Flossy darted forward with one low, glad cry,—“Wobberts! it's my Wobberts!” and the next instant the tall man in the stylish garb had bent, clasped the little maiden in his arms, and was kissing her again and again. Then he arose, simply saying,—

“Don't you know who this must be, Mabel?” But the dark brown eyes were wet with tears, and tears that brimmed over as the young lady, too, seized the child in her arms and held her, shy and wondering, to her heart. It was then that Mrs. Pease stepped forward, smiling.

“It must be, and yet I think I should hardly have known you. Your beard, I suppose,” she faltered.

“It is I,” answered the gentleman, as he raised a very neat silk hat. “Yet not Robberts, exactly. Mabel, dear, this is my kind friend, Mrs. Pease. Mrs. Pease, my sister, Miss Marvin. Doctor Pease, I had no idea you were here, but I am just back from abroad.”

“Suppose you introduce yourself, Robert,” suggested Miss Marvin, who, 'twixt smiles and tears, was clinging with both hands to Mrs. Pease. “If I hardly knew you, how could they?”

“Robert Marvin, doctor, at your service,—but Flossy's ‘Wobberts’ always,” he added, as he bent again and kissed the wondering little maid. “Are you stationed here in the harbor?”

"Yes, at Fort Lawrence, Mr.—Mr.—Marvin. And is your home in the city?"

"Not now. Not since my father's death, eighteen months ago. I," and here he blushed just as vividly as of old, "I am the head of the family now, doctor, though only a very complete specimen of a worthless son when I knew you on the plains. It was that medal that brought forgiveness. I had not seen my father in six long years, and Mabel was the only one after mother's death who thought me worth even trying to save; and even she had no idea where I had gone for nearly a year before that raid. I sent her word after I was wounded."

The two men had clasped hands, and Pease would not let go. He was studying closely the other's face. The clear, steadfast gaze in the brown eyes was so unlike the old furtive, shame-stricken glance.

"You are *looking* very well," he said, tentatively. He did not like to ask what was uppermost in his mind.

"I *am* very well, thank you, doctor, very well," he added. "I have much to live for now, and no desire to fall back to the old misery that began in college days and ended—God be thanked!—with that winter campaign."

"Gad," said Pease, reflectively, "that took the starch out of a dozen men I know of; but——," and he paused, irresolutely; he hardly liked to refer to the matter again.

"But it gave me a chance to pull out of the rut, you are thinking. Aye, doctor, it did, and to restore me to health, home, to my father and sister. But the first hand that I remember seeing extended to help me out—God bless it!—was this." And like a courtier, Mrs. Pease told us afterwards, he bent and raised Flossy's little kid-gloved hand to his lips.

THE RUSE OF THE YANKEE CAPTAIN.

“Deep night.—Dark night,

* * * * * * *

That time best befits the work we have in hand.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE slave-trade as it existed upon the west coast of Africa during the years 18—, 18—, 18—, was not carried on, as is generally supposed by the American public, in clipper ships, that were faultless in model as well as matchless in speed; on the contrary, old and almost unseaworthy vessels were usually employed, and these, as far as came under my observation, were owned and fitted out for this nefarious traffic by parties residing in the United States.

One instance only occurred during these years in which a nearly new and really fine clipper was used for “running a cargo,” and this under the circumstances which I am about to narrate.

Our naval forces on the coast consisted of four sailing-vessels, none of them noted for speed; and one, the Flag-ship, cruised most of the time among those pleasant islands situated on the northern limits of the station,

“Where African fever ne’er was known,
And slavers ne’er were seen.”

The English naval force was quite formidable, and, having a large number of vessels, all steamers, no point on the coast was left unguarded, and it was by their efforts that the traffic was finally broken up.

The *modus operandi* of slavers was somewhat like this. A vessel, costing but a few thousand dollars, cleared from some port in the United States—generally Charleston, South Carolina, or New York City—for St. Thomas and a market; thus either the island of that name in the West Indies or the one of the same name near the African coast was available.

The cargo consisted of cheap muskets, gunpowder, cotton cloths, trinkets, and rum, for trade and the purchase of slaves. They sometimes also carried lumber for the slave-deck, and rice for slave food, but not often, as it was hazardous and rendered them liable to seizure on suspicion.

The *personnel* was one captain and two mates, Americans, and a crew of eight or ten, made up from the depraved of all nationalities. There were also, as passengers, a supercargo and three other persons, generally Spanish. The supercargo held a bill of sale of the vessel, and as soon as the slaves were ready for shipment took command (landing the Americans), and appointing the passengers as mates and slave-driver. If boarded by our cruisers after this change of ownership, we had no jurisdiction, unless, as sometimes, they (not knowing the nationality) destroyed all papers, and of course were then a lawful prize to any cruiser.

Upon arrival on the coast, these vessels traded from point to point, landing goods as needed for the purchase of slaves, and agreeing with their agents as to the place where these slaves should be collected in a barracoon and cared for until ready for shipment.

Should they be seized by an American cruiser during these operations, they had to be sent in charge of a prize

crew to the United States, where, after the law's tedious delays, they would either be bonded or cleared by the court having jurisdiction. If seized by an English vessel, they were turned over to the first American man-of-war fallen in with, when the same preceding routine would have to be carried out. Owing to this delay and difficulty, the English seldom seized a vessel until the slaves were actually on board. When the required number of slaves had been collected, the vessel ran a few miles off shore during the day, and standing in at night, awaited the agreed upon signal informing them that cruisers were absent, the "coast clear," and a favorable opportunity for shipping the cargo was at hand. Then anchoring close to the beach, in a few hours the living cargo was stowed on board, and "the vessel spreads her wings" and is "off and away," generally for the "Ever-faithful Isle of Cuba."

The English government kept their forces advised in advance of the name and description of every vessel fitting out in the United States and sailing for the coast, this information being sent by consuls in those ports whence the vessels departed; all of this information was courteously given by the English Flag-officer to the officers in command of our ships; and but for this courtesy we should have been completely in the dark regarding suspicious vessels.

Among the most noted houses in New York engaged in fitting vessels out for the coast, with an agency at the city of St. Paul de Loando, and with factories established at several places along the coast, and also in the interior, for the purchase of slaves and storage of goods, was the firm of—well, we will call them "Smith & Brown."

This firm had been established about two years, and during that time had sent four vessels out, each one of which had been captured just as the slaves were about being shipped; so their papers were destroyed, and they became lawful prizes to their English captors.

The firm also owned, as a regular trader, a beautiful clipper named the "Helen," which had made several trips to and from Loando and New York, bringing goods to the agencies of the firm, and carrying return cargoes, consisting principally of palm and peanut oils, thus doing a perfectly legitimate business.

This vessel was well known to all "cruisers," English as well as American, and her captain, "Jones," was personally known to nearly every officer on the station.

Judge of our surprise on board of the "V——" when, one morning, our captain read to us watch-officers a communication from the English commodore, the purport of which was that the "Helen," on her return trip from the Congo River, was ordered to run a "*cargo of ebony*," and that she was, on leaving Loando, to proceed to that river, fill with slaves, and sail for Cuba.

As our officers were well acquainted with most of the mercantile firms doing business in Loando, they asked from several, information on this subject, and it was readily admitted that the owners of the "Helen" had ordered Captain Jones, through their agents, to run a cargo of slaves, and that his reply had been, "I did not ship for any such work; but, if you will make it an object for me to do so, I will try. My terms are two thousand pounds sterling, in bills on England, payable on demand, to the order of my wife, and in addition to this sum, for myself, the usual pay and percentage that

is made to captains on their successful landing of a cargo." These terms were acceded to, and when the bills of exchange had been handed to Captain Jones he mailed them to his wife, and then sailed for the Congo River.

Of course, we overhauled and searched this vessel thoroughly, but nothing improper or contraband was found on board,—she was all right. On the morning of her departure from Loando the English commodore, in his Flag-ship, arrived off the port, and when the "Helen" was clear of the harbor and pointed up the coast, started with and accompanied her, both vessels "coming to" near Shark's Point anchorage, inside the mouth of the Congo.

The English commodore, being quite intimate with Captain Jones, then boarded the "Helen" in person, and, after a pleasant luncheon, the following conversation took place :

"I say, Jones, my boy, you know I hear you intend taking a cargo of slaves on your homeward trip."

"Is that so, commodore? Who told you such nonsense?"

"Now, Jones, it is no use for you to deny it, for my informant, you know, is positive about it."

"Well, commodore, since you are so positive, I will not deny it; but should I determine to run a cargo, as you assert, you are not the fellow to prevent my doing so. You would have to get up too early in the morning."

"Now, Jones, my fine fellow, I'll prove to you that I am the fellow that will get up early enough to prevent you; and, by George, I will stop you! Good-morning, sir."

The commodore left in a huff, swearing that he would circumvent that infernal Yankee, Jones, if he had to place every vessel of his fleet on guard in the Congo.

The "Helen," the next day, ran up the river with the sea-breeze, anchoring at a point fifteen miles distant, where a factory and agency of the firm was established, and the commodore sent for two of his fastest vessels, anchoring them, one on each side of the river, just inside the mouth, where it is about five miles wide.

The officers in command of these steamers were ordered to have the "Helen" boarded every day, and to be particular to see that she made no arrangements for receiving slaves, and to report at once when she made any preparations for receiving stores, or for sailing.

As the distance from the blockaders (if I may so term the watching vessels) to the "Helen" was so great, they took turns in sending a boat for the boarding duty, which boat, leaving the steamer at early daybreak, by pulling close in to the river's bank, and thus avoiding the rapid current, would arrive alongside the "Helen" about ten o'clock. On the first day the officer and crew of the boat were received on board courteously and treated to a good breakfast, after which they started on their return. On the second day the officer and men of the boat received the like treatment, but on the third day "a change came o'er the spirit" of those on board the "Helen," for as soon as they sighted the English boat pulling up, and before it came alongside, the American flag was hoisted at the peak, and another was draped over the gangway. Then Captain Jones, hailing the officer in charge of the boat, said, "This is an American vessel. You know it,—your commodore knows it, and

every one of your officers know it, as well as your crews. 'I know my rights, and, knowing, dare maintain them.' Neither you nor any of your crews, nor any other Englishman, shall set foot upon the decks of this vessel again. I will not be annoyed by your boarding-parties any longer. *Now, clear out !*" The officer pulled back down the river without a word in reply.

As the boat turned head, down-stream, the crew of the "Helen" gave one loud, ringing laugh of derision, and then, with stentorian voices, sang,—

"Oh, Johnny Bull my jo John,
Your fruitless schemes forego;
Remain on your fast-anchored ships,
Oh, Johnny Bull my jo !"

The next day a boat pulled up the river, but the officer in charge contented himself with examining the "Helen" from a short distance and then returned to his vessel. Then the "Helen" began "stripping ship," and soon lay with "lower yards down and topmasts housed," and the hull covered with coarse matting, to protect it from the intense heat of a tropical sun; then all hands, except a ship-keeper, moved on shore, to reside at the factory. Days and days passed, a boat regularly pulling up the river and observing the dismantled hulk, pulled back to their ships, and reported NO CHANGE.

This duty at last became so irksome and monotonous, that it was asked of the old commodore to let up a little on his orders, but he refused to abate a particle, replying to the applicant, "that he was not to be gulled."

One day, as soon as the visiting boat was out of sight on her return, the shore near the "Helen" became alive

with men, working in gangs, each actively employed; one party boarded the vessel, stripped the mats from the hull, and began sending spars aloft and to rig ship. Another party brought stores alongside, and another party took them on board and stowed them. Everything and everybody worked without confusion; there was a master-spirit directing every movement and governing all, that master-spirit was Captain Jones.

By sunset the "Helen" was "all atanto," with stores on board and sails bent; then began the stowage on board of *six hundred human beings*, each one of whom had been selected; this was accomplished by ten P.M.; then the "Helen" left her moorings, dropped down the river noiselessly, as far as the first island, and there filled water-casks and awaited the going down of the moon, which was to be at

"The time when screech-owls cry and bandogs howl."

Then, the land-breeze blowing freshly, she slipped away from the island; with square yards, mid-channel, she drifted, the current and wind carrying her five or six knots the hour. At three A.M. she passed the blockaders, unseen by any one on board, and when far enough from them made sail, and at daylight was but a speck on the horizon. A boat left the steamer at the usual hour of that morning, but on arriving at the point of observation of course no vessel was to be seen. The officer in charge rubbed his eyes, looked again, and said, "I say, coxswain, I don't see that bloody Yankee ship; where can she be?" The boat pulled closer, pulled over the spot where the "Helen" had been moored, pulled to the shore, and then from the débris to be seen all around,

the truth dawned upon them,—they knew that the bird had flown. Without a word—speechless from surprise—they pulled to their vessel, the officer reporting *what they had seen, and also what they had not seen.*

Signals were made; each vessel got under way, stood to sea, and cruised on different courses, but the slaver was not seen; the English commodore had not arisen early enough to catch the bloody Yankee.

As for the “Helen,” she arrived safely off the coast of Cuba and landed her cargo, receiving therefor TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS.

After all expenses had been paid, including bribes to officials in Cuba, the firm of “Smith & Brown” netted one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The “Helen” after this sailed for New York, but on the passage was conveniently burned, when in sight of another vessel, which rescued all hands. The owners obtained their insurance. Such were the profits of those engaged in the slave-trade when successful in landing a cargo.

“A LOVE-CHASE.”

I.

“I DECLARE, it’s too bad,” said Miss Drummond. “I never saw a review, and I don’t know when I’ll ever have another chance. Isn’t there any way of getting there?”

“If you had the wings of a dove and could fly, or even the feet of a duck and could paddle, there wouldn’t be any trouble,” replied Lieutenant Ryland.

“Well, I ought to have wings,” she pouted, “for papa said only to-day that I’d been a perfect angel for the last two days.”

“Poor papa,” said pretty Mrs. Lee; “only think what you must have been before that; but why can’t we have the ambulance? Four horses could get us there.”

“Don’t you believe it, Mrs. Lee,” interposed another youngster, as he dexterously inhaled, without scorching his tender, adolescent, petted mustache, the last whiff of the cigar which, as a great favor, had been produced from the major’s precious box. “Bob and I tried it last week with four of the best horses in camp. We started to look in on the Eleventh Infantry, only six miles off, not much over half the distance to Stevensburg. Well, we got along all right till we struck the old corduroy road. Lots of the logs had rotted away entirely and left chasms where they had been. The fore-wheels went down in one clear up to the hubs, and the jerk came so suddenly that, good driver as Molloy is, the pole-hook broke and the leaders went back to camp.”

“What did you do?” asked Miss Drummond. “Went back after them, I suppose.”

“No, we didn’t. Bob here is such a mule that he insisted on going on with two horses, and the consequence was that, before we got one-third of the way back, the beggars played out completely and we unloaded, and I had the satisfaction of seeing Bob slumping home in his swell-tops which he had put on to crush the Eleventh. I don’t believe he’ll ever get into them again.”

“Couldn’t we go on horseback?” said Miss Drummond. “I know where I can borrow a saddle.”

“No horseback for me, my dear, if you please,” Mrs.

Lee said, with an energy unusual in her. "I haven't been on a horse since goodness knows when, and I'm not going to be on exhibition."

"Oh, you couldn't stand it," said Ryland. "Your skirts would be so loaded with mud that you couldn't walk after you got there; and you wouldn't have any fun, for there's going to be a big time at the general's head-quarters,—reception, dance, and all that sort of thing after the review is over, and you wouldn't want to miss that."

"Miss that? I wouldn't miss any of it for worlds," pleaded Miss Drummond; "and, what's more, I won't. You've simply got to find a way. I know if Mr. Hamilton were here he'd find a way."

An expression of intense weariness pervaded each hitherto eager youngster, and they looked at the glowing log in the wide chimney, whether to seek an inspiration or select a nice warm spot for Mr. Hamilton, will always be a matter of conjecture. This chimney was the admiration of the entire Horse-Artillery Brigade. It was entirely built of brick, while all others were content with well-daubed clay. Major Drummond had chanced upon the ruins of a house, one of the melancholy wrecks of war's dire storm, and, being rather acquisitive than communicative, had quietly sent out a wagon and detail and gobbled the last remaining brick.

The aspect of the room was not unworthy of the splendor of the chimney. Split logs, actually squared and lined with gunny-bags, towered up to a height of five feet, above which was pitched a hospital tent. Just think of it!—a hospital tent! A brigade commander could not be better lodged. Then there were real chairs, a

table with a cover, and a comfortable chintz-covered couch, one or two rugs, hanging shelves, books, all the cosey signs of woman's humanizing presence, and tangible in flesh and blood, glowing with health and life, were the two. Young matronhood, calm, sedate, large in outline, warm in color, with all the repose of a nature which knows and has tested its charm, and feels that it has only to exert a wish and men will love again as men have loved before ; and girlhood, standing in the open door of life in the consciousness of power unbounded, because untried keen intellect and vivacious fancy shining through the sparkling black eyes, birth and breeding manifest in every movement of the tall, elastic, well-poised figure.

We left the youngsters gazing at the fire, feeling at this imperious and deliciously unreasonable demand like children unjustly scolded. How long they would have remained in helpless collapse no one can say, for, as if in response to her expression of confidence, in walked a young man, tall, pale, and slender, with an air of calm self-confidence which, while it irritated less justly than an aggressive demeanor, never failed in the impression of putting forth in some indefinable way a claim to stand upon a higher plane than you did ; a claim which in time became an offence all the more grievous that you could see no way of pulling him down or even of reaching him.

"Mr. Hamilton," exclaimed Miss Drummond, "you have just come in time to help us out of our difficulty."

"Ah! delighted to hear it," he replied. "*Deus ex machina*, I suppose. What's the situation?"

"The situation," replied Miss Drummond, striking an

attitude, "is this. Two young and lovely women have expressed an ardent, a consuming, an unquenchable desire to go to the review day after to-morrow. Two tire-some young men, instead of flying to execute their wishes, annihilating all obstacles, are furnishing reasons why they can't go, and throwing cold water on all their suggestions."

"Now, you know that isn't fair, Miss Drummond," interposed George Holt, the rosy-cheeked youngster with the budding mustache. "I've just been thinking ever since we came in."

"Miss Drummond," replied Mr. Hamilton, with a bow, "is always fair, though in this particular case perhaps not strictly just; but a wilful woman, you know, maun have her way, and it is the mission of devoted swains to discover a way, or, if need be, to make it."

"Hamilton," replied Bob Ryland, "you don't often talk sense, but in this particular instance your head is level. Ladies, confide in us. You shall go. We have said it. Come on, George; I've got an idea."

"If you've got an idea, Bob," retorted Hamilton, "don't let it sit up late. Well, good-night, if you must go," and through the open door a bright glow and warmth were diffused into the keen atmosphere, and stray gleams fell upon the tall gaunt trunks of the pine-trees, making more sombre the moonless night.

Robert Ryland was a lucky youth, as these days went. Although only twenty-two years old he commanded Captain Percy's famous horse-battery. Son of a very prominent politician, and belonging to an old and distinguished family, he had seen a little of life in the tumultuous mob of Washington society.

Always passionately fond of horses, his first service with a battery attached to the Irish brigade had given him a violent sporting turn. Not being a West Pointer, but a Yale man, he had brought with him no cavalry prejudices to bind him to what was called an army seat. A willing and enthusiastic pupil of one of the most famous of the Galway fox-hunters who was serving on the brigade staff, he came to the horse-artillery a really good cross-country rider for his age. Being, as his friend Holt said, a bit of a mule, he never tried to conciliate a single prejudice, but rather went out of his way to jump on men who rode with long stirrups, straight knees, and forked seats. Indifferent to argument and ridicule, he had ridden himself into the respect, at least, of the horse-gunners, and now and then his worst defamers would admit that Bob could take a horse over a rasping ditch in good style. He had even begun to make converts, of whom the most recent was the youth now walking arm and arm with him through the winter night.

George Holt was a country boy from the far Northwest, attached as a volunteer to one of the regular batteries. Crude as to education and society, his handsome face and figure and a certain inborn air of distinction attracted every man and woman at first sight, while his reckless daring, sweet temper, and fresh, boyish ways endeared him to his friends.

It is quite probable that in the society of Mrs. Lee, the pretty wife of the adjutant-general of the brigade, and Major Drummond's graceful daughter, George learned his first social lessons. Not having an atom of bashfulness, because free from self-consciousness, that unfortunate

obverse of vanity, he was a rapid scholar ; and where in the great art of putting a young man at ease with himself, and therefore on pleasant terms with the world, can be found such a teacher as a charming married woman ? In this winter camp at Brandy Station, Va., in the winter of 1863-64, was all the freedom of the family, and indeed it was a very happy family,—sweet Mrs. Lee, Kate Drummond, a girl of rare qualities of heart and brain, and all these high-spirited youths, with fame before them, duty and patriotism to warm their hearts and nerve their arms, and in this welcome rest and cessation from war's alarms the image and reflection of home to keep alive humane and tender feelings.

“Come in, George,” said Bob, as they arrived at his quarters, “and I’ll tell you my idea.”

The fire, which still glowed in rapidly darkening embers, having been built up and the pipes lighted, Bob unfolded.

“You see, George, the trouble is in stopping the leaders in time when the blessed old wagon goes into a hole. Now, if we could put in two good artillery teams with careful drivers, couldn’t they get it along anywhere ? The wagon is strong and light compared with a gun, and we’ve seen a gun yanked through places a heap worse,—the Chickahominy, for instance, where I’ve seen six horses break through a crust which looked dry and go up to their bellies in liquid mud. What do you think ?”

“I don’t know,” said George, thoughtfully ; “it’s a queer scheme ; and yet I don’t see why it wouldn’t work. Six horses could certainly do it.”

“Right you are, my boy,” said Bob, triumphantly,

"and six horses would look a great deal better than four. I've got two staving swing teams. They'll be heavy enough, and I'll borrow that chestnut lead team from the New York horse-battery. Then they'll all be of a color."

"And we'll get the drivers up in style,—buy them top-boots at the sutler's, and new whips, and have the harness blacked and the brasses burnished," added Holt. "You see those ladies have set their hearts on going, and I'll take any amount of trouble rather than disappoint them. When Miss Drummond seemed so sorry, do you know I couldn't bear to look at her."

"Yes," said Bob; "and when she got you down and stamped on you because you said the horses couldn't do it, you were just as meek as Moses. Now, that isn't the way, George, to get along with women. A woman admires strength above all things. A little judicious brutality is a great thing sometimes, but that, of course, you should keep for emergencies. Indifference is the trump card. Just the moment a woman thinks you are indifferent, that instant she sets herself to work to fascinate you. In trying to fix the hook in you, like a clumsy fisherman, she gets it in her own fingers."

"Well, but, Bob," said George, doubtfully, "you seemed to be as anxious as I was that Kate—I mean Miss Drummond—shouldn't be disappointed."

"Nonsense, George. I was bound that that insufferable prig, Hamilton, shouldn't put his oar in. *Voilà tout.*"

"Do you know, Bob, I'm awfully glad that you don't care anything about Miss Drummond. I know it's absurd for a boy like me, so inferior to her in every way,

to even think of her; but I can't help loving her; and then, you know, Bob, its war-time now, and maybe, if I'm lucky, I can do something to make her proud of me. Do you think I've any chance?"

"George," said Bob, rising from his seat, and then, after several turns up and down the tent, as if summoning all his resolution, "You know I like you, old man. I taught you to ride. I've given you lots of good advice, because, don't you know, you don't know the world as I do, and I hate to hurt you; but, as a man of the world, and as a friend, it is my duty to tell you that I don't think you've got a ghost of a show. You're awfully good-looking, and an ordinary girl would fall head over ears in love with you, but Kate Drummond is no ordinary girl. She requires a man older than herself, a man in whose social knowledge and experience she can find the balance that her impulsive nature wants. The man that wins her must take her by storm, overawe her by his strength, and fascinate her by his *savior faire*."

"Certainly, Bob," replied Holt, ruefully; "but then," brightening up a little, "there isn't anybody like that around here. Most of the fellows are West Pointers. They're better educated than I am, but they don't know much more of the world, and I'm going to ask her anyhow. I'd like her to know that if I ever make any kind of a name, or get killed doing my duty, she's been my—my inspiration."

"George," said Bob, solemnly, "I haven't told you the worst, but I can't let you subject yourself to certain refusal. You know what sort of a life I led in Washington: it was a life to make a man doubt the possibility of ever really loving. I thought my heart was dead,

burned to ashes, I might say ; but when I saw that woman, I recognized in her the weird and subtle power of Flora Bellasys—you remember the woman in Guy Livingston. I cowered, disguised my feelings under a mask of cynical indifference, but I fear she has penetrated my secret. She has looked at me of late in a way that seemed to pierce my inmost soul. And you know all, George ; can you forgive me ? I never dreamed of supplanting you. Shake hands, old man."

George rose and warmly clasped Ryland's extended hand.

"It's all right, Bob. I know you wouldn't do it intentionally. I'm afraid I haven't any chance, but still I must know my fate from her own lips."

"Upon my soul," said Ryland, considerably nettled. "You've got more cheek than I thought you had, but I've warned you ; I can't do anything else. So you really think that you're going to leave the happiness which is denied to ninety-nine out of every hundred men, that your first dream of love is going to come true, when other men, much older and wiser than you, George, have seen their idols broken, and, worse still, have found that they were only graven images all the time, and graven out of very common stuff sometimes. But go on, my boy, try your luck, and if she says yes, don't forget to ask me to the wedding."

While Holt was still writhing under his crushing irony, a knock was heard, and a very striking man stood in the doorway ; black, glossy, bushy, and curling as to hair, white and glistening as to teeth, brilliant and shifting as to eyes, the adjutant-general of the brigade, Lieutenant Lee.

"Ryland," said he, "Mrs. L. tells me you're all going to the review. How you're going to get them there I don't know, but she says you've promised, and I thought I'd ask you if you'd like to ride the mare down?"

"Why, of course I would," said Bob. "But how are you going?"

"I think I'll go in the wagon," Lee replied, with a light shade of embarrassment. "You see I haven't been well lately, and I'm too heavy for the mare. Anyhow, Mrs. Lee wants to see her jump, and I know she'll act better with you."

"All right," said Bob, joyfully. "I'll do the best I can with her, and if George rides Isaac we'll give the ladies an impromptu steeple-chase."

"You send over your man when you want her," said Lee as he went out.

As the door closed upon him, Bob said, "Now isn't that like Lee? Did you ever know him to be under the weather except when we get orders to move, or there is some chance for his beauty to be damaged?"

Poor Holt, who had been crushed to earth by Bob's superior worldliness, had brightened perceptibly at the word steeple-chase, and now jumped up almost hilariously. "Say, Bob, we'll make it a steeple-chase for a big prize. Do you remember in Charles O'Malley how Charley and that English fellow rode for love and Lucy Dashwood? Now suppose we say that we'll take the country in a straight line from here to Stevensburg. You know it a great deal better than I do. The man who gets in first shall have the first chance to try his fate, and the other must promise to stand back and give him a show. What do you say?"

Bob descended at once from his lofty social plane and became the eager sportsman.

"I say done. It's giving you big odds, a thoroughbred against a cocktail; but Isaac's got such an infernal temper that there's a very fair chance for him to break your neck, or get away with you and run himself to a standstill. So shake hands on it. The great love-chase comes off day after to-morrow. P. P. Play or Pay."

II.

THE next day was spent in preparation. Harness was washed and oiled. Brasses were rubbed till they shone like gold. New blankets were drawn from the quartermaster. With what negotiations and what flatteries the captain of the New York battery was wheedled out of his showy chestnut team can only be conjectured. All eligible drivers in the battery were passed in mental review and submitted to a searching examination under three heads.

Could they drive? Would their appearance shed lustre upon their surroundings? Could they be depended on not to get too drunk to drive home?

One after another having appeared in ghostly procession and put through viewless tests, the selection was made by the survival of the fittest.

The next day was a perfect Virginia winter day. Earth and air were softened and mellowed by the sun's genial rays, while the lingering crispness of the early morning gave a zest like ice to champagne.

In front of Major Drummond's quarters was gathered a merry and excited group, merry with the anticipation

of the day's pleasure, eagerly expectant as to the ways and means.

Nothing could have been prettier than the effect of those two bright faces, fair and dark, framed in furs against a background of uniforms and tall spectral columns, where the great pitch-pines towered gaunt and straight in the partly-cleared space dotted with queer-looking log huts, crowned with canvas that had once been white, with mud chimneys surmounted by empty barrels by way of chimney-pots.

By the side of the ladies stood Bob Ryland, with the air of the fairy godmother conjuring Cinderella's coach out of a pumpkin, and George, his loyal coadjutor, with a calm confidence that was contagious. They were not long kept in suspense. A sound of trotting hoofs, a rattle of wheels, and the black leather-covered ambulance rolled into view drawn by six splendid horses, their winter coats of rich chestnut plush glistening under the bright scarlet blankets. The harness might have just come from the shop, the brasses glittered in the sun. Even the trace-chains had been burnished. The postilions—erect, muscular figures with bronzed faces and fierce mustaches—sat their horses with the easy grace of men who have lived much in the saddle. Their artillery jackets, trimmed with scarlet and shining with bell-buttons, contrasted admirably with top-boots of felty polish, while the jockey-caps, which George had purchased from the all-providing sutler in place of the ugly forage-caps of that day; large, plated spurs and heavy-handed whips gave the desired sporting effect.

No wonder that George looked on proudly while Miss Drummond exclaimed, "This is simply bewildering.

Ah, Mr. Ryland, I knew you could do it if you tried." And Mrs. Lee looked unutterable things.

Major Drummond, on the contrary, greeted the turnout with shouts of laughter. "Well, boys, where are the black plumes? who is going to be buried?"

"All of us, I fear," replied Mr. Hamilton, "in the mud."

George remarked, *sotto voce*, to Bob, that he didn't believe there was mud enough in Virginia to stop his mouth.

While the merry party, including Lieutenant Lee, is being stowed away in the much-enduring wagon, two soldiers bring up Isaac, and Lieutenant Lee's bay mare Isaac is worth some study. At first glance you see a rather long-bodied, short-legged animal, of an ugly light-bay color, with a mane and tail much the worse for the inquisitive teeth of his companions at the picket-line. Eyes of sullen fire gleam in a bony head with a very broad forehead, and nostrils capable of wide distention. The neck is light and straight and set rather low in deep sloping shoulders. The legs look short, but the length of the forearm is great compared with the lower leg. The body, unmistakably long, is powerfully ribbed-up, and big ragged hips with a high drooping haunch indicate great propelling power. When you are told that he was once on the track in Kentucky and cashiered for meanness, you set it down as a bouncer; but a careful survey of the mane and tail, fine and silky as a woman's hair, the delicate taper ears, the broad flat bones of the lower legs, and the long oblique fetlocks, modify your opinion. And making all allowances for the chewed-up mane and the rough coat, it is not hard to trace a relationship to the silken-coated beauties of the blue-grass

land. The mare was a compact, handsome animal, an inch taller and much shorter-coupled than the horse. Her head was fine, neck rather thick, legs and feet excellent; in short, a fine specimen of the charger.

Bob had picked her out of a big lot in the quartermaster's corral when he was adjutant-general of the brigade, and taught her to jump, which she took to uncommonly well.

As they rode through the camp after the wagon, they gave their steeds an eye-opener in the shape of a brush fence which surrounded a vacant space where had once been an officer's quarters. The mare rose high, but dwelt considerably on landing in a fashion which in a race would have cost her a length at every hurdle. Isaac made a long stretching leap without breaking his stride, but caught both forefeet in the top, and, but for the brittle nature of the long cut wood, would have got an ugly tumble. "Ah, ha," said Bob, who had dropped a little behind to watch Isaac, for fences were so rare in Virginia in those days that he had never seen him negotiate one, "I always had an idea, my friend, that your long body wasn't partial to a fence; and if I can only steer George up against a couple of stone walls that I know of, I've a notion that you may come to grief."

After leaving the woods in which the camp was situated, the wagon took the road to Brandy Station, and the two rivals cantered over the fields on the right side of the road. Bob, who acted as pilot, chose the right side for two reasons; first, on account of the stone walls aforesaid, and, second, because on the left side he had a distinct mental vision of a ravine at least twenty feet wide

and as much in depth, with perpendicular banks. He knew that should George once get a glimpse of it, he would put Isaac at it to win or lose it all right there; and with the brute's pluck and breeding, backed by his great muscular strength and immense stride, there was a very fair prospect of his getting over; whereas he knew that the mare wouldn't face it, and that if she did a broken back for her, with the strong probability of a broken neck for himself, was all he could expect.

The ditches on the right were many and stiff, but none beyond the capacity of any good horse ridden straight. There was no attempt at racing. The going was so heavy and the distance so long that each man knew the folly of tiring his horse by any premature bursts. Besides, they were riding for the gallery, and often walked their horses to keep within sight of the wagon laboring through the liquid mud with its six strong steeds. As they came near the stone bridge, and Bob was endeavoring to divert George's attention from the other side of the road where the great ravine yawned, a fortunate diversion occurred. A cheery voice behind them hailed in familiar Pennsylvania Dutch accents,—

"Where vas you boys goin' to?" It was Lieutenant Diffenduffer of the First Dragoons.

"To Stevensburg," replied Holt.

"Vell, I goes dere too. I goes along mit you."

Bob cast one significant and comprehensive glance from his own English hunting saddle, light steel stirrups, and broad-reined snaffle, to the big, coarse, black troop horse with heavy arched neck, thick straight shoulders, the McClellan saddle with its sweat leathers and clumsy

hooded stirrups, and the severe curb-bit buckled tightly in the jaw, and then said,—

“Come on, old man; but we’re out for business and can’t stop for any little accidents.”

“Oh, dot’s all right. I guess I can go where you goes,” said Diffenduffer; and the three splashed along over the swampy ground, George little dreaming that what was a march on that side of the road, was on the other a beautiful chasm, capable of burying Robert’s aspirations twenty feet deep, or leaving him pounded and helpless on the brink. A couple of small drains were cleared, the black showing considerable reluctance, but persuaded by vigorous spurring, mixed with sundry Teutonic objurgations. In front of them now loomed the biggest thing in the way of water on the left-hand side, twelve feet in width, with bad broken banks. Bob recognized it at once, and knowing the importance of a good margin with such treacherous soil, put on pace and began working up the mare for the effort. The long walk over the swamp had given them a good breathing spell, and she responded to the spur and broke into a sweeping gallop. Bob picked out a place of medium width with fairly firm banks, and increasing the pace at every stride, rushed her at it. Pluckily she rose, but jumping unnecessarily high, and with her fault of dwelling in landing, her hind hoofs broke the soft clay, and it was only Bob’s skilful hands and readiness for any emergency that saved her. Isaac was a beautiful sight as he came down to the water, his lean head eagerly extended, and his long, low stride regular as clock-work, fairly devouring the distance. George recklessly headed for the very widest place and the very

worst of the bank, but the old horse chose his distance to take off as few living riders could have done, and George knew enough to give him his head and let him alone. With a terrific rush in the last half-dozen strides, Isaac launched himself from the very last inch of firm ground, and clearing the broken bank by five good feet galloped on.

Diffenduffer came on pluckily, but the black was cringing and going short with the evident intention of refusing, and nothing but the most vigorous driving at the hands of a rider who meant going all over could have given him a chance. Diffenduffer allowed him to slacken his pace until within ten lengths, and then seeming to awake to the situation, began spurring vigorously. Driven to the edge, the brute still tried to refuse, but the rotten bank giving way, he toppled on his nose, shooting Diffenduffer over his head into a couple of feet of about the muddiest water that Virginia could furnish, whence he emerged a Neptune of the puddle, making the air blue with observations "hot from Tartarus." Seeing no damage done, they kindly said good-morning and rode on. Soon one of the walls from which Bob hoped so much came in sight, and he reined in, knowing the weight of Sir Ashton Smith's famous maxim, "You can't go too fast at water, or too slow at a fence."

George followed his example, and side by side both horses rose.

The mare was thoroughly at home here, and cleared it with eight inches to spare. Isaac made a beautiful hurdle leap, long and low, knocking off a couple of big stones which, luckily for him, were loose.

And now Bob showed the foxy nature of his sporting training. He deliberately forced the pace to the next wall to give Isaac every chance to hit it hard. George walked into the trap, and feeling confident, spurred Isaac hilariously until the ugly brute got mad, and taking the bit in his vicious jaws, raced for the wall. Instead of pulling him down to a canter and getting his legs under him, George rushed him as he was wont to do at his ditches. Isaac struck hard, and finding no loose stones, came down in a heap in the soft mud, sending George clean and safely over his head.

Bob came up quietly and took it with ease, and seeing George unhurt, rode away. After going one hundred yards, he looked back, and seeing George still on foot, called out, "Come on, old man; Isaac's all right, isn't he?"

"Yes," shouted George; "but my girth's broken all to pieces. Never mind me; I'll find the wagon and rig up something. I give it up."

Now if Bob had had a perfectly clean conscience, his turf education would have told him to go on and win; but he knew he had managed to get Isaac away from where his great powers would have left the mare helplessly in the lurch, and that he had gone out of his way to find a wall which he suspected would stop him.

So with a magnanimity which I am sure all racing-men will appreciate, he rode back, and taking off the extra surcingle which he had over his own saddle, he put it on Isaac.

George said, "What did you do that for?"

To which Bob replied, "I took an advantage of you,

and I'm making it square. Now we'll start again. I'll tell you about it as we go on."

From this time out the jumps were few and easy, and the affair ended in a literal, flat race, in which Isaac's blood and stride easily distanced the mare. Then began a lively dispute as to who had really won the race, and such was the actual guilelessness of these hardened old sports that George insisted that Bob was a soft-hearted duffer for coming back, and had won the race then and there, and Bob said, "that if he had taken advantage of the trap he had set after shirking the ravine, he would never speak to himself again."

So they finally settled it by tossing a quarter, and Bob won the right to first put his fate unto the touch.

Hardly had they settled it when the wagon came in sight, and they joined it to do duty as outriders in the pageant. When they arrived on the big plain above Stevensburg, the cavalry line was formed with two horse-batteries on the flank. Just as they got into the place assigned to spectators, a long line of steel glinted in the bright sunlight, as the sabres were brought to a "present." Then the line broke into column, and with the clash of kettle-drums and the stirring notes of horns, the march past began. As each company passed, Bob and George announced it to the eager and wondering ladies. There was something marvellously picturesque in this spectacle, not of holiday soldiers in all the pomp and circumstance of inglorious parade, but in the actual panoply of war. The absolute silence, the eyes to the front, and the accurate dressing spoke of discipline learned in places where inattention meant capture or death, and the solid ranks told of long and weary days and nights of marching

before these horses could step so rigidly together. At last, even to the inexperienced eyes of the ladies, it was evident that something was passing excelling in these points all that had preceded. When a company of iron-grays passed without a single horse of another color they broke into delighted exclamations.

"Oh, Mr. Ryland," they said, with one voice, "what is that?"

"'K' troop of the Second Dragoons," was the reply.

The Fifth Cavalry, that band of heroes with the proud memories of Gaines' Mills, were duly wondered at and admired. Close behind the Sixth United States came a regiment whose officers were conspicuous for jauntiness, even in that crowd.

"There, ladies," said George, "is the swellest thing in America, the Sixth Pennsylvania (Rush's Lancers). You've danced the German with most every officer in that regiment, if you've ever been in Philadelphia."

The horse-batteries particularly delighted the ladies loyal to their own arm of the service, and when one strikingly handsome fellow saluted with an extra moulinet, they breathlessly inquired his name, and their interest did not diminish when told that he was the son of the Postmaster-General, and that he had in a recent fight construed an order to retire into an order to go six hundred yards nearer the enemy and open with case-shot.

After the review was over, the major-general rode up, cap in hand, to assure the ladies that their turnout was the most brilliant feature of the day, and that the young gentlemen who designed it had immortalized themselves. The reception and dance which followed completed their

enjoyment,—the ladies, I mean,—but it was marred, not to say spoiled, for our heroes by the sudden disappearance of Miss Drummond. No one could give any information until, as symptoms of breaking up became apparent, Mrs. Lee seized disconsolate Bob by the arm and said, "Oh, Mr. Ryland, do try to find Miss Drummond. We really must be going."

"I have been trying to find her for the last hour," Bob replied, sadly.

"Well, now," said Mrs. Lee, "that really is too bad of Kate, when there are at least one hundred men here and about ten women. I suppose we may consider the thing as settled now." And as Bob's eyes began to slowly leave their sockets, she exclaimed, "Oh, there they are at last!"

Incapable of speech, Bob mechanically followed her looks and saw, coming from some *terra incognita*, with a proud smile of happiness on his face and a tender light in her beautiful eyes, making soft what had hitherto been brilliant, Mr. Hamilton and Miss Drummond. As the youngsters helped them into the wagon, Mrs. Lee said, "How beautifully you rode the mare, Mr. Ryland!" And Miss Drummond added, "I never saw anything in my life, Mr. Holt, as plucky as the way you went on after that terrible fall."

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Hamilton. "How much I wish that I could do that sort of thing. I actually envied you."

"You look as if you did," replied George, savagely.

"Well, I can't say that, either," laughed Mr. Hamilton. "It wouldn't be polite," as his eyes rested lovingly on the fair face, never half so fair as in the soft light of new-

found happiness. "But we are all under the greatest obligations to you who prepared all this pleasure for us."

George and Bob mounted their jaded steeds and rode solemnly behind the wagon.

After a few yards, George looked actually timidly up into Bob's lowering visage, and Bob, catching him in the act, turned with an air of annihilation; but an inspiration saved George.

"Bob," said he, "there's a beautiful ditch." As the long-suffering steeds went over with a groan of protest, Bob's face relaxed, the clouds lightened, broken gleams of sunshine appeared, and finally both burst into a hearty peal of laughter.

George said, "Bob, it's the old fable of Æsop about the lions and the fawn."

"Who in Hades was Æsop?" said George.

"An old Greek duffer who wrote fables. The lions found a lovely fawn, and got to fighting over it; and when they got through, found that a fox had come along and walked off with it."

"Just our fix," said George. "But I say, Bob, I don't believe they were lions."

"What then?" said Bob.

"Donkeys."

THE LADY OF MALTA.

I.

NOT many years ago, I was fortunate in having for a shipmate one who was extremely odd in being extremely commonplace. He was neither good nor bad looking, tall nor short, stout nor slender, wise nor foolish, religious nor worldly, and neither precise nor careless. I was neither attracted nor repelled by him when I first met him, and it was not till we had been long in the same ship that I became even slightly interested in him. He was never dull in conversation nor was he ever enthusiastic over any subject. Of this latter trait I am well informed, for I tried, in every way, to find some question, some opinion, some thought that would excite his enthusiastic support or his earnest condemnation. To be sure, I have heard him dress a man down for some misdemeanor, and he could do it effectively, yet in all he had to say there was not the slightest tinge of personal anger or feeling. He gave the man his medicine for no other reason than that he thought the man was in need of it. He was my relief, and as sure as eight bells struck, and on the instant of the striking, neither before nor after, he was on the bridge, ready to take my place and my trumpet.

As time wore on we became more and more intimate. Often we went ashore together, going to the same places of amusement, seeing the same sights, taking in the ports and places the ship visited, in a matter-of-fact sort of

way that can be easily imagined. These trips were not uninteresting or unenjoyed, however, for they were very pleasant to me, and my only regret was that I had not had him as a companion in all my wanderings. I had previously visited many places which had little or no interest, but on revisiting them in his company, they were seen in a new and brighter light and became practically new scenes to me.

When I discovered his talent for drawing and painting, I was simply delighted, yet in this he was the same *general average* I had always known him to be. The pictures he produced were neither simple ideals nor simple realities; they were not confined to landscape, marine, architectural, figure, or sentimental subjects, and were neither hard drawn nor dashed. I well remember my making a pencil sketch of the Tower, Cathedral, and Baptistery of Pisa, afterwards making a water-color from the sketch, and then a pen-and-brush study in india ink. I took his criticisms on these pictures with the same humility and earnest attention that I would, had they come from Titian, Raphael, or Doré. According to him, my pen-drawing was too hard and exact, my water-color too free, and the pencil sketch was the best of the three.

While we were in Malta, we went ashore nearly every day, and the picturesque town of Valetta gave us much enjoyment. Howard made a very pretty sketch of the "Marina Gate," which was near the landing-place. We walked completely around the fortified wall of the city, noting the magnificent views to be had from various points. We visited the palace of the Grand Master, with its Piazza St. Giorgid, made sketches of the armor and warlike weapons belonging to past Grand Masters and Knights

of Malta, and examined closely many beautifully wrought pieces of tapestry.

From the palace, we went to the Cathedral of St. John, viewing that admirable piece of sculpture, the Baptism of Christ, the grand altar, with its many-colored marbles and other precious stones, the slabs covering the remains of knights of the order, and escutcheons, set in beautiful mosaic, looking as bright as if laid down but yesterday.

It was while contemplating these things, in the cathedral, that I heard a soft step, as some one passed me, and, turning, I was fixed with admiration of a graceful figure which was moving quietly in the direction of the mausoleum of Grand Master Emanuel Pinto. My first impulse was to call Howard's attention to her, but that mixed selfishness and secrecy we all possess prevailed, and, noticing that he was absorbed in contemplating the painting of the "Beheading of St. John," I drifted along down the nave, mechanically looking at the stained glass windows, the carvings, the columns, while at the same time I kept a weather eye on the symmetrical figure that had passed.

The light became dim as evening approached, and in the dusky shadows many of the beauties of the church became more beautiful. I came to the chapel of the "Portuguese Knights" and there found the lady kneeling before an image of the Virgin. Being in a position where I could not see her as I wished, I moved slowly and quietly around to the opposite side, and found a nook in a dark recess behind a pillar, where, unobserved, I could drink in what, to me, was the most beautiful picture I had ever seen. The sun's rays were slanting through the windows, and were variously colored by the stained

glass. The figure, in simple dress, was kneeling, the head, covered with a Spanish mantilla, was bowed, the face, resting in the hands, was invisible. The folds of the dress hung about her figure, making a drapery effect never seen in real life and seldom in the most idealistic of paintings. Her hair was warm brown, and, though arranged in latest fashion, yet was loosely drawn and showed the waves that are always lines of beauty.

As the sun sank, the colored lights stole over her dress and, as she raised her head and gazed, with large lustrous eyes, at the image of the Virgin, the colors chased each other over her face. As she arose and turned to leave, my eyes followed her and soon I caught sight of Howard. He was facing directly towards me and his expression I shall never forget. He did not see me; he saw only her and followed her to the door. I joined him soon after, and we made our way to the landing, where we took the boat for the ship. That night I dreamed more or less of the "Lady of Malta," as I was pleased to call her, and, in imagination, fought more than one duel for her sweet sake in the Strata Ferratti. When I awoke I was thankful that the duels had been dreams, but I was sorry the lady was not also a dream, for I knew the memory of her would give me much trouble in spirits.

The ship left Malta that morning. It was six months later that Howard was detached and ordered home, and during that six months he said nothing about the "Lady of Malta." From close observation of him, I saw that he had been somewhat affected by the incident. His occasional use of profanity had become semi-occasional, his attendance at church had become more frequent, and he was slightly more sentimental. His being ordered

home troubled me somewhat, for I did not like to part company with so good a shipmate. Just before he left, I asked him what had caused the changes I had noticed in him. In his quiet, pleasant way, he took me to his trunk, which had already been packed, unlocked, opened it, and after pulling off some wrappers, he disclosed to my view a water-color of the "Lady of Malta." It was a magnificent picture and represented her as we had both seen her. The lights and shadows nicely balanced and the tinting was exquisite. It was the work of an artist-lover. Under it was written, "Lead, kindly light, lead thou me on!"

Turning to me, he said, "Jack, that is the cause, and that is my shrine."

"Give it to me as a token of friendship," I said.

"Well, no, not now."

II.

A year later found me sick, a convalescent from coast fever. After spending a few weeks at the Brooklyn hospital, I was granted sick-leave, and went home to recuperate. My mother's brother-in-law, Mr. Martine, was about to start on his regular summer trip, in his steam yacht, and invited me to join him. I accepted and joined the yacht at New Haven, Conn. Mr. Martine met me at the gangway, and walking aft, introduced me to such of the party as I had not met before. Among them was his daughter, Miss Annie Martine, my own first cousin, the "Lady of Malta." My head began to swim, and I believe I should have fallen in a faint, or jumped overboard, or done something crazy, if my uncle had not hustled me below and given me a bracer. Before I went on deck, I got the lay of the land and was prepared to

hear my cousin tell all about her travels, her trip to Europe, her trip to the Bermudas, and of her poor mother's death soon after their return to New York. I, in turn, told her about myself, about Howard, about Malta, and about the picture that Howard had painted. She proved to be a most worthy cousin, of winning manners and sweet disposition, coupled with cleverness, brightness, and good common sense.

It was a merry party we had on board the yacht and we hoped for a merry trip. A pleasant day at New London, a week at Narragansett Pier, another at Newport, and we were on our way to Boston. My uncle looked to me as the revising authority on all questions of seamanship and weather, and when it came on to blow, as we entered Vineyard Sound, I was consulted as to whether we had better seek shelter or proceed on our course. After debating between the idea of safety and comfort for the party, and the idea of being looked upon as a coward by the sailing-master and crew, and thus bring discredit to my cloth, I decided to proceed. When we got to the Monomoy Passage, it was blowing a gale; we had not seen any lights for half an hour; it was too late to turn back; the yacht was straining badly in the heavy sea; I was on deck, doing what good I could to keep things ship-shape; we had passed buoy No. 7 and were heading for the perpendicular striped one, that marks mid-channel, when I heard the cry,—

“Light ho!” shrill and sharp as a madman's shriek.

“Where away?”

“Close aboard,—port bow,—green!”

“Port,” I cried,—“Hard a——” Crash, and I thought the heavens had fallen and then—I ceased to think.

When I came to, I was in a strange bunk, on a strange ship, and my uncle was bending over me.

"It is all right, my boy," he said.

"What is all right? Tell me all about it."

"Not now, but I will after you take another nap."

I fell into a doze, or dream, in which a bright green light bothered me much. When I awoke, my uncle told me, in few words, how the yacht had been run into and completely disabled, how I had been knocked senseless, and how, in all the tumult, I had been found and dragged aft to the main saloon, by the heroic efforts of my cousin, Miss Annie; how the gale became more furious and the helpless yacht drifted on to the point, despite the anchor they had managed to let go; how a whale-boat had reached us through that terrible sea; how, through caring for me, Miss Annie nearly lost her life, but was saved by the man in charge of the whale-boat; how we were all taken around to leeward of the point and placed aboard of the schooner; and how the yacht had since gone to pieces and was a total loss.

Miss Annie told me how she had come through it all, how nicely she had been treated by all on the schooner, and how considerate and gentlemanly the captain had been. She was so enthusiastic in his praise that I began to discourage her talk, as I feared she might fall in love with the schooner captain, which was worse, in my opinion, than if she were to marry her father's coachman.

My uncle and myself seemed to be the only ones who had come out badly in the smash-up. I had a broken leg and he had lost his yacht, but we could both afford it. I had a good constitution to fall back on, and he had a goodly pile of bonds and bank-stock.

"Hello, Jack, how are you?" There stood Howard or his ghost.

"Well—I—hang it—I've got a good square case of coast fever, that's how I am."

"No you haven't, old fellow. You are only struck a little end on. Go to sleep again and I'll see you when you wake up."

It came dimly to my mind that I was on a coast survey schooner, and that Howard was in command. He was the "schooner captain." I went to sleep, or rather to a prolonged nightmare, for such dreams as I had cannot be found in any dream-books.

The schooner was the "Precision," and a couple of days later Howard got her under weigh and we went to Hyannis Port. In the quaint little village of Hyannis we took our leave of the schooner and Howard, and I noticed that, when Miss Annie bade him good-by, quite a large cable was parted. I was carried to the train on a stretcher, and, on my arrival home, began to mend slowly. A few weeks later, while hobbling around on a crutch, I received a letter from Howard, asking me to come to Chatham, Cape Cod, as he had no doubt that the climate, and especially the sea-breezes, would do me good. I knew that my uncle and Miss Annie had gone there to spend the remainder of the hot summer days, and had now been there some four weeks. They had taken one of the cosey, neat little fishermen's homes for which Cape Cod is famous.

I hobbled aboard the train, and at my journey's end found uncle, cousin, and old shipmate waiting for me. Arriving at the cottage, a good down-east supper was heartily enjoyed, after which we assembled in the parlor

and had some music, Miss Annie playing, while Howard sang. She looked more beautiful than ever, as she sat at the piano, and, as the melodious tones rose and fell, I wandered across the sea to the Cathedral in Valetta, joining the music with the picture, the sounds with the lights, the soft tones with the delicate tints. While thus enjoying my revery, Howard came to me and quietly, handed me his picture of the "Lady of Malta." Then, going over to the piano, he took Miss Annie in his arms and kissed her. Mr. Martine slowly crossed the room, took their hands in his, and said, "That signature is good; and I'll pay cash by giving my daughter to you."

As I was best man, I took the best man's privilege. As a wedding-present, I sent her a pendant Maltese cross, which an old shipmate procured for me in Malta.

A MAID OF THE HILLS.

I.

"PAP sez, what's yure licker a quort?"

"Did he say he'd pay in koin or dust?"

"I tole yer what he said!"

"Sharp as usual, Madge; ain't yer? Well, yer pap ought to savey by this time; he's bought enough of it. Tell him it's two eagles a quart, a bird an' a bit a pint, an' six bits a half-pint."

"I never did brag much on my book-learnin', but I'll be durned if I can't figger better nor that. If it's two dollars a quart, it ought to be *one bird* a pint, an' *four* bits a half-pint."

"Yure pap didn't say what it *ought* to be, Madge; he axed what it *was*, an' I tole yer."

Madge at once perceived her error, and slapping her skirt with her *quirt*, or Indian riding-whip, in a manner betraying annoyance, she filliped a fifty-cent piece on the bar, saying,—

"There's four bits fer a half-pint!"

The man behind the bar bit a piece of tobacco, the size of an egg, from a large plug, and, giving his trousers a hitch, said, "No one could refuse yer nothin', Madge. I'd give yer what yer wanted, even if I had to put it on the slate."

"I'd change my name afore I'd have it a shinin' on that docket," answered Madge.

"If all I hear's true, it won't be so *durned* long afore yer are a swapping the last half of it, Madge."

"All I'm swapping just now is them four bits fer the licker!" And the whip came down on the rough bar in a manner that gave emphasis to the remark.

The proprietor of the "King of the Hills Saloon" rinsed out a small black bottle, and, swinging a three-gallon demijohn across his shoulder, poured a portion of its contents into the vial. Apparently more escaped from the larger vessel than was intended, for he raised the bottle to his lips and took a swallow before handing it to Madge.

"If etiket was a-sellin' fer a cent a mile, yer wouldn't have enough to buy an inch!" she observed, as she thrust the bottle in her pocket.

"I'm obliged to yer, Madge; we *will* fergit our manners now an' then. What's yourn?"

"That ain't what I ment, Ike; but rum's done nothing to me that I should go back on it."

Then a black bottle and a tin-cup appeared upon the bar, and Madge helped herself, saying, as the tin neared her mouth, "Well, may the dust of yure kerrige blind the eyes of yure enemies!"

The King of the Hills Saloon was the most popular resort of its kind in Deadwood at the time the reader is introduced to it,—October, 1875. It was owned and kept by Ike Short, who had killed his man and "crippled" many another. It boasted of a large hall, with a bar at one end of it, which was used for dancing, and not infrequently for fighting; and the adjacent small bar-room, where the dialogue between Madge and Ike took place. This was a small, dingy apartment with but one window. The bar consisted of two common pine boards, supported by three empty whiskey-barrels. On the farther side of this were some rude shelves displaying various bottles. The building was unplastered; but the logs and "chinking," which formed its construction, were hidden from view, when within, by numerous coarse pictures, taken from different sporting periodicals. Two narrow benches were arranged close to the walls, and several low three-legged stools offered their services to those desiring a seat. And upon one of the former sat a gentleman Madge had failed to see when she entered, and whom she had not observed up to the time of her draining the cup. But Madge had not escaped the observation—the scrutiny, in fact—of Richard Redwood, who sat quietly in the shade, his appearance presenting a striking contrast to his surroundings.

Redwood was a man twenty-eight years of age, tall, well-made, and handsome. A rather heavy, light mustache quite hid his exquisitely-cut mouth and his perfect

teeth. His large, heavily-fringed eyes were very blue, and the dimples in his cheeks showed plainly even when his face was in repose. He wore a Norfolk jacket of Scotch stuff, and drab corduroy breeches. A narrow-rimmed felt hat and top-boots completed his get-up. To be sure, the belt of his jacket was partly hidden by the leather one holding his revolver and knife,—rather necessary adjuncts of the toilet in those days.

It seems in a measure sacrilegious to attempt a pen-portrait of Madge. She should be seen to be appreciated; yet even then, perhaps, her rarest gifts, her most valuable possessions, were the admirable qualities which sight, that is, a momentary inspection, might not reveal.

Madge—the only name she knew—was eighteen years old. She was above the average height, and her superbly-moulded form was so finely developed that one might easily be led into error respecting her age. Her features were as distinctly cut as those of a cameo, and faultlessly classic. Her large, black eyes might have been a shade smaller without injury, and her hair of that blue-black color, found nowhere but on the raven's throat, was braided into a broad plait, which fell far below her waist. Her hands and feet were small and noticeably shapely. Her skin was fleckless, and of that rich, indescribable color, that blending of red, brown, yellow, and white, seldom met with in nature, save in an October sunset and a California peach. Her voice was peculiarly soft and musical.

The plain waist she wore was of blue flannel, and it fitted her snugly. Her skirt was of deerskin, trimmed only with a fringe of the same material around the bot-

tom; she also wore a belt, from which peeped a pair of fair-sized, silver-mounted revolvers. Her magnificently-shaped head was crowned with a felt hat—evidently a man's—of the common plain's pattern.

Madge was generous, brave, loyal, tender, and as proud as her own towering pines, that refused to bend to the storms of heaven or the shocks of earth. She was naturally, instinctively good and pure; her one dreadfully disfiguring blemish was her lamentable lack of education. She had never been to school in her life, and, though she could read and write after a fashion, yet her mode of speech, her whole deportment, in fact, was little different from that of her associates, who were men of the Ike Short type

Her knowledge respecting refinement and modesty was precisely similar to that of the beautiful flower that blooms only at night. Her conception of right was also intuitive. She might kill the man who offered her an insult and never be conscious of one pang of remorse; unless the bullet, after performing its fatal mission, should accidentally injure a rabbit. Then her grief would be sincere and pathetic.

Such was Madge, a queer medley, a quaint pot-pourri, needing only artistic arrangement and finish to merge into the grandest symphony that ever thrilled the human soul.

Though Redwood from where he sat could only catch momentary glimpses of her face, yet he was not slow to perceive its great beauty, nor was he insensible of the grace attending her every motion.

And graceful she was, as the young fawns she pursued over the hills and plains, mounted, man-fashion, on

her fleet pony, with her Henry rifle firmly clasped and held between herself and the pommel of her saddle. And like them, too, she was as wild; but it was a wildness that again resembled theirs in its innocence.

It was an appetite, not a passion, Redwood knew when he looked upon her; and he was fully conscious that it was his palate rather than his mind which was agreeably excited. The sensation she occasioned was much like that experienced when gazing on a large, luscious peach.

As Madge put the cup down, Redwood arose, and as he approached the door the astonishment her face revealed was genuine. Politely lifting his hat, he would have passed out, had she not prevented him by saying,—

“Must be a stranger in these parts! Tenderfoot or drood?”

Redwood could scarcely conceal his mirth as he answered,—

“I cannot lay claim to being the former as I was a cavalry officer at one time, and am quite familiar with life in frontier settlements. I may be of the latter breed, but you really have the advantage of me.”

“Madge don’t take the advantage of no one!” broke in the proprietor, who overheard and entirely misunderstood Redwood’s remark.

“He don’t mean the *bulge*! I savey what he means,” replied Madge; and then, addressing Redwood, “I don’t know what a drood is mesel’. But thar was a feller from Noo York here last week and Sol Perkins allowed he was a drood. He was pretty like and had sharp-pinted, shiny shoes on.”

"Oh, I fancy I know what you mean," Redwood answered, laughing. "No; I am not a dude, miss—miss——"

"Yer needn't be a missin' her, stranger!" interrupted the proprietor. "Madge's her name."

To this Madge silently bowed assent, and again turning to Redwood, said,—

"Where yer hangin' out?"

"I have made no arrangements yet; I came in but a while ago on the buckboard."

"Pap an' me can giv' yer a shake down up to the crib; an' if yer've nothin' pertic'lar to do, I can show yer how to rope a steer, still-hunt a elk, an' open a jack-pot."

"I will avail myself of your kind hospitality with great pleasure," was the answer; and really pleased Redwood was at the prospect of abiding under the same roof with this wild, fascinating creature.

"Have yer a horse or a mule?" was the next question.

"I fear I must plead not guilty," was the reply. "But perhaps our friend here, the proprietor, might assist me in that direction."

"Right yer are!" glibly responded Ike, who fancied he saw an opportunity to realize something. "I have a five-year-ole mare that can't be beat. Yer can have her fer a few days on trial, as long as yer put up at Madge's. Three hundurd's the figger."

"Now, he ain't no sucker, Ike!" essayed Madge, determined that her new acquaintance should not be duped. "Didn't he tell yer he'd bin in the calvery? I rekon he knows a spavin from a beauty spot!"

The mare was soon in readiness, and, scorning his proffered assistance, Madge swung herself gracefully

into her own saddle, and with Redwood at her side away they go.

"Have you lived in this country long?" he asked, as they trotted briskly along down the old road that winds through the hills.

"Bin in the crib 'bout three year. Cum from the Loop to the crib, an' from Salt Lake to the Loop. Lived all aroun', kinder."

What a pity, what a crime it is, thought Redwood, that this beautiful, bewitching girl should have been permitted to grow up in this manner.

"Have you any companions of your own sex?" he asked, his mind still active in the same direction.

"Not a durned one!" responded Madge. "The leddies round here ain't just my style, yer see. In fact, I hain't no *companyuns* but my horses an' dogs an' a few wild pets."

"And fortunate you are that you have no others," said Redwood, mentally, as he recalled with a shudder the class of "leddies"—the sole representatives of that noble sex—he had met in Julesburg and Cheyenne in earlier days. "Leddies," some not ill-looking, some rather comely; but all of that unmistakable type which, when observing, a refined man instinctively sees beneath the *rouge* the Ten Commandments stamped upon their one cheek, and the significant word, *violated*, emblazoned upon their other.

"That trail takes yer to the 'Lidyer'", volunteered Madge, as they crossed a narrow pathway leading to the right.

"Ah, indeed!" answered Redwood, showing much interest. "How far is the mine from here?"

"Not more nor a mile, I re'kon," was the response. "The drood I spoke of allowed as how he owned it."

"What is the man's name?" asked Redwood, bringing his horse down suddenly to a walk.

"Richerson. He's got a gang a-watchin' it now, an' they have orders to *drop* any one that comes round a-meddlin'."

"That's cheerful news," replied Redwood. "My sole business at present is to examine the 'Lydia' mine. I am sent here from New York by its owners. I cannot imagine who this Richardson is."

"Well, yure not a-goin' up thar till I've prospected a bit; yer hear that! I ain't a-goin' to have the only man I ever kind o' knuckled to knocked over like a measerly kiote! Here's the crib!"

A rude structure, whose exterior was not unlike the bar-room they had lately left, was directly before them. It had more windows than Ike's establishment, and the little flower-patches each side of the doorway and the well-swept walk bespoke a neatness which was not apparent in connection with the former.

A typical frontiersman came around the corner of the building as the horses stopped.

"Pap, I've fetched a boarder! He's from New York, an' he's bisness at the 'Lidyer.'"

"Shake, stranger," said the individual known as Utah Bill, reaching a large, bony hand to Redwood. "Any one's welcome here that my little gal fancies. She never mistakes in the quortz nor the color!"

"I'm glad to meet you," answered Redwood, fully comprehending the intended compliment. "I should like to put up here for a few days. My name is Redwood, Richard Redwood."

"Proud to know yer, Mr. Redwood! Gentlemen of yure kidney are scarce in this section. Will yer licker?"

"I believe I will take a drop. I have had no breakfast yet, and I feel kind of flabby."

"Here, Madge," shouted Bill; but he was interrupted by Redwood, who, rightly conjecturing his purpose, drew from his pocket a handsome silver flask, and said, "Do not disturb your daughter. Try some of this brandy; you'll find it a trifle better than you can get here."

"Right yer are, Redwood! or Dick, if yer don't buck at my familyerarity!" exclaimed Bill, smacking his lips. "I hain't tasted stuff like that since I left the States back in '50."

"I should much prefer to have you call me Dick," answered Redwood; not deeming it objectionable to be on familiar terms with the father of Madge. "Do you know this man Richardson your daughter spoke of?"

"I seen him down to the saloon when he was here. I put him up fer kind of a cold-deck. He's got some tuff ones guarding in the 'Lidyer,' which he claims."

"But the 'Lydia' is owned by a syndicate composed of New York gentlemen who command many millions of dollars. I am a mining engineer, employed by them to make a thorough examination of the property."

"Have yer any pals with yer?"

"Not a soul," was the answer.

"Take my advice, Dick, and lay around here a day or so. Madge will find out all 'bout it. Thar's not a feller in the Hills that don't love her an' fear her. What's got her? Where are yer, gal?"

"She's dun took her rifle an' rid oph!" shouted back

a voice, which was of Madge's sex and unmistakably African.

"Thar's a dance down at the 'King' to-night. We'll go down, and perhaps I can pick up a few pointers for yer. I wouldn't let on jist yit what yure bisness is."

"Very well, I will not," answered Dick, wondering where Madge had gone.

The colored woman prepared a suitable meal, and, after breaking his long fast, Dick spread a blanket under a neighboring giant pine and was soon lost in visions wherein Madge conspicuously figured.

II.

The afternoon wore on, but Madge had not returned. Old Sol disappeared in all the glorious splendor of a Western sunset as Redwood and Bill mounted their horses and started for the town.

"Are you not anxious, alarmed at all about your daughter? Is she not afraid to be out after dark alone?" asked Dick, somewhat uneasy himself.

"*Madge afeered!* Why, Madge ain't afeered of the devil, Dick! She's a salting some deer down on the *Belle Fourche*, and I reckon she's a watchin' em."

But she was not. Madge was at the Lydia mine laying down the law to the rough gang Richardson had put in charge. She told them that a representative of the lawful owners of the mine was at her house, and that he would be at the mine in a few days to carry out his instructions, and that if they dared to interfere with him, she——

Well it was a terrible threat, and they all knew that Madge never broke a promise.

The dancing hall was ablaze with lights, coal-oil lamps of various cheap varieties were arranged around the room on small shelves, and a few lanterns swung suspended from the ceiling, which, as Ike expressed it, "Gave the thing tone."

Some fifty rough-appearing men of different ages and about thirty hard-looking women were congregated therein. The hurdy-gurdy in the corner was, in discordant tones, grinding out "Annie of the Vale." The air was thick with tobacco- and lamp-smoke; those who were not conversing were swearing. A shot was fired as a signal to take partners for a reel.

It was at this moment Bill and Dick entered the room. The former was, of course, well known to all. But many were the glances of curiosity directed at Dick, who, though fully conscious of the speculation his presence gave rise to, showed no sign of embarrassment or annoyance.

Two tough-looking individuals entered and went straight to the bar, and while drinking seemed to be earnestly conversing with Ike Short, who was dispensing the fluid. "That's him over thar with Utah Bill," Ike says, as if in reply to some question.

"Well, I've obeyed Madge up to date an' never bucked! But d—— me if I'm goin' to have her, or him, or any one else skeer me outen a payin' job."

"Why, what's up, Mose?" asked Ike, apparently interested.

The man called Mose then related the visit of Madge to the mine, her orders respecting Redwood, and her threat if they should fail to obey.

"Richerson seemed to talk straight," responded Ike.

who had a kindly feeling for the man who had acted so royally at his bar.

"Straight or not," answered the other of the toughs, "he pays well, an' all we've got to do is our dooty."

And in this manner they drink and talk, while Dick, not ten yards from them, is wondering where Madge is.

He turns to make an observation to her father, and is met by a woman, who says,—

"You're not dancing, stranger; can't you treat?"

Knowing that he is in a Rome where it is the safer policy to do as others do, he answered that he would. Then with his unknown companion he proceeded to the bar.

"How are you, Mose? How are you, Shorty?" exclaimed the woman, addressing the two tough characters who still lingered at the dispensary.

"Right lively, Calamity; how's yerself!" was the response of Mose.

"Perhaps your friends will take something?" suggested Dick.

"You bet they will!" was the reply; and then, turning to her acquaintances, "Name your pizen, boys."

After drinking the health of Redwood, Mose, who seemed to be a trifle unsteady, turned to him and said,—

"Are you the owner of the 'Lidyer?'"

"No, indeed! Why should you think so?" was the reply.

"I heered some talk to that effeck, an' I have orders from Mr. Richerson, the owner, not to allow no meddlin' round thar."

"Madge wants to see yer outside."

These words were whispered into Redwood's ear by

Bill, who carelessly sauntered up and leaned against the bar, as Dick, saying, "Excuse me a moment," stepped outside.

There sat Madge, mounted on a different horse from the one she had ridden earlier in the day.

"That ain't no place fer *you*!" she said, as Dick drew near to her. "Let's git up to the crib."

Dick did not wait for a second invitation. He stepped back to inform Bill of his intended departure, and a moment later was again trotting by the side of Madge down the old road.

What a glorious night it was! The moon was full; the myriads of stars were endeavoring to outvie each other in brilliancy, which was scarcely remarked, owing to the more powerful influence of the "Silver Queen." The soft ambient air was heavily perfumed with the odors of the mammoth pines that loomed about them as they left the little settlement behind.

"Where were you this afternoon, Madge? Your father said you were off to the *Belle Fourche*."

"No; I'll go thar to-morrer, if yer'll go along."

"I will gladly go with you anywhere, Madge; but I think I ought to pay my respects to the 'Lydia' first."

"The 'Lidyer's' not goin' to stampede! Yer'll find her thar later."

And with this he considered himself engaged for the morrow.

Fair was the dawn; the sun came up bright and beautiful, and soon after breakfast Madge and Dick, mounted on their fresh, spirited horses, set forth for the *Belle Fourche*. They took the same old road that one year later was pressed by many of Dick's friends, as,

hungry, disgusted, and weary, after a tiresome and unsuccessful scout, they rode into the hills on the poor jaded beasts that had escaped the butcher's knife solely because they were not in fit condition to eat.

Madge broke the silence by saying: "I notis you don't talk like I do; yer talk more like folks in books."

"I speak in the same way as do those with whom I was brought up, and with whom I associate."

"D'yer think yer could learn me to talk like yer does?" asked Madge, fixing her glorious eyes on his, as her cheeks for the first time in her life betrayed a faint suspicion of bashfulness.

"With ease and with pleasure," answered Dick. "I will begin now, if you promise not to be angry when I correct you."

"*Angry!* me git mad at *you!*" And the rich musical laugh of Madge rang out upon the crisp air.

How happy they were, so far from every living soul save each other, as they rode along over one of the most picturesque roads in what has not inappropriately been termed "God's own country!" The sun was striving ineffectually to pierce through the rich luxuriant foliage forming an archway above their heads. The California quails ran along before them as fearlessly as do the chickens before a country-wagon on an Eastern farm; and not infrequently an antelope or a blacktail deer would bound across their course, aroused from their noon-day slumber by merry peals of laughter and the clatter of the horses' feet.

It was a never-to-be-forgotten day to Redwood. He had been interested, amused, fascinated, and surprised at one and the same time by the beautiful girl, who was

quite unconscious of the impression she had made ; and before he reached home he was conversing with himself after this fashion,—

“ If I might only teach her, and of course it will be an easy matter, there is no woman in the world I would rather marry ! Gad ! how the fellows at the next Patriarch ball will envy me when they see me sail in with my wild flower ! and how secretly jealous all the fair ones will be of her. The radiant —— (and he mentioned the name of a reigning belle) will have to look to her laurels when my queen of the hills enters the arena ! ”

And with similar romantic reflections, which clearly showed the way matters were tending, the “ crib ” was at length reached.

Soon after they had done justice to a venison steak, which could not have been more temptingly prepared by an imported *chef*, Madge retired to her own apartment.

Dick and Bill sat smoking before the fire which was blazing on the hearth.

“ Well ! ” observed the latter ; “ I re’kon Madge put yer through to-day ? ”

“ Your daughter is a wonderful girl, Bill ! truly *wonderful* ! ” was the reply.

“ I allow she’s above the average ’croppin’s ! an’ Dick, *she ain’t my darter* ! ”

“ What ! ” exclaimed Dick, as fears too horrible to contemplate flashed upon his mind. “ Not your daughter ? ”

“ No ; I’ll tell yer what I’ve never tole mortal afore.” And then, helping himself from the bottle that stood near by, Utah Bill puffed at his pipe a moment and then said,—

“ I was a-dealin’ faro down to Salt Lake City back in

'57. Yer may hav' heered of a party of immigrunts from Arkinsaw that was massacred by the Mormons an' Injuns in the fall of that year. The killin' was called the Mountain Medders Massacre."

"Yes, yes;" assented Dick, showing considerable excitement and intense interest.

"Well, the devils butchered the hull outfit, 'cept the kids that were too young to blab. These was divided 'round like. Pete Slocum got Madge. She worn't above two weeks ole, the doctor sed. Born on the trip, yer see. Pete was a onery cuss, an' I knoo he'd not act squar' with her; an' as he owed me a gamblin' bill, I jest tole him I'd take the babe an' call things settled. He bucked at first; but a week later he handed her over. I 'dopted her, an' moved up on the Loop Fork, whar I lived a spell on a cattle ranch; then I cum here. Every one—Madge herself—thinks she's my kid. She's bin a good gal to me, an' Dick, she's as pure as the nuggets yer'll find in the 'Lidyer'! But I allow she needs polishin'. I didn't edicate her purpusly! I saveyed that if she got to knowin' *too* much, she'd kind o' long fer the things an' the companyuns I couldn't giv' her. An' we don't pine fer things we know nothing 'bout. See? So I jest let her grow up wild-like, knowin' she was of the right breed,—that Arkansaw party was thoroughbreds, they was,—an' that when the right one cum along he cu'd easily teach her."

"I have begun that already, Bill," responded Dick, who felt greatly relieved.

"I sorter called yer hand afore you'd anted," answered Bill. "But I saw what yer was a drawin' to, an' I kind o' knowed yer'd fill."

"Sir," replied Dick, "I am thoroughly infatuated with your adopted daughter. I will instruct her and guard her as carefully as if she were my sister, and later, with her consent and your approval, I shall be proud to make her my wife."

"Shake an' licker, Dick!" exclaimed Bill, springing from his seat. "Durn me if the Epistle Porl wouldn't drink on such a run o' luck as this!"

What happy, blissful days those were that followed. Constantly together, Dick and Madge spent their time riding and walking, hunting or fishing, and in the midst of her pleasure Madge was continually receiving valuable instruction. In fact, a very great improvement was already noticeable. After repeating a sentence Dick had spoken correctly for her, she said, "My men friends will not know me, I shall be so changed." A week earlier she might have said, "the fellers," or, worse yet, "gentlemen friends."

On a bright morning, a few days later, Bill and Dick started for the "Lydia." "It's allus best to be fixed fer the worst, then yer won't never be dis'pointed," was the observation of Bill that prompted Dick to carry his rifle. They reached the trail leading to the "Lydia," and, turning into it, jogged along, single-file.

"Hullo!" exclaimed Bill, as they ascended the slope adjacent to the mine, "that hut's new to me, an' thar's some one in it; see the smoke?"

"Yes," answered Dick; "some of Richardson's gang, I fancy."

"Keep a sharp lookout, Dick! These devils of his have been keepin' pretty full of licker lately, an' they may show fight."

He had hardly ceased speaking when the man called Mose appeared in the doorway of the hut, rifle in hand. The two horsemen greeted him civilly, and, dismounting, tied their horses near by.

"What might yure bisnis be, Utah Bill?" asked Mose.

"This gentleman's bisnis is to examine the mine fer the benefit of its owners," answered Bill, rather airily.

"Richerson is the owner, an' I got orders not to 'low no one 'round here," responded Mose, fondling his rifle.

"I do not recognize this man Richardson," replied Dick. "My orders are direct from head-quarters, and I intend to obey them. I will relieve you of all responsibility by informing Richardson that I overruled your objection."

"But yer hain't overruled it yet," retorted Mose, in an insinuating way and with a treacherous leer.

"Cum on, Dick. None of your nonsense, Mose; I hain't fergotten that Virginny City bisnis yet," said Bill.

Grinding an oath between his teeth, Mose disappeared within the hut, and the others strolled off towards the opening of the mine. They were standing quite near to this cavity when——

Bang! bang! went the report of two rifles, and Bill dropped suddenly to the ground.

Hastily cocking his rifle, Dick drew it to his shoulder, and, covering the man he saw in the act of aiming at himself, he pulled the trigger. Then, turning to Bill, he asked where he was hit.

"Leg's broke, that's all. We must clean them out; I can shoot yet," was the reply.

"Zip! zip!" came two more bullets; and as the shooters

spring back to cover, two well-directed shots are sent after them by our heroes.

"I b'lieve we fetched 'em both, Dick," laughed Bill, in spite of his wound.

Dick descended the slope cautiously and saw stretched before him three men, apparently dead; one by the door of the hut, and the two at whom they had just fired.

"Shorty's dead! yer needn't fool with him. Giv' me a drink!" came from the mouth of one of the men, as Dick bent over the other. He hastily unscrewed his flask and handed it to the wounded man.

"I'm dun up right this time, I reckon," he said, as he drained the flask.

Dick extended his hand for the flask, and the man grabbed his wrist, and, with a sudden and powerful jerk, pulled him forward on his face. An instant later the supposed dying man was uppermost and he had Dick by the throat.

But Dick had not been idle. He had the other wrist of the man in a vice-like grip, and with his clinched fist was punching his assailant's ribs with as much force as his awkward position allowed.

Poor Bill saw it all, but was powerless to interfere. It would endanger Dick's life to shoot, and he could not crawl that far. "Oh, if Madge was only here!" he sighed,——

When, almost instantaneously with his thought, her horse springing along like a frightened black-tail, her long hair streaming in the wind, Madge flings herself from her excited brute, places the muzzle of her pistol against the temple of the man engaged in strangling

Dick, and says, calmly though sternly, "What did I tell you?"

Never was abject terror more faithfully illustrated than in the face of the villain, who relaxed his hold on Dick and fell backward; while Dick, springing to his feet clasped Madge in his arms and imprinted on her lips the first and only kiss they had ever known.

In this manner the "Richerson" dynasty was born, and so it perished. Its existence was as brief as its demise was sudden.

Solely to enable him to show some reason for remaining in the hills, Dick accepted the position of superintendent and general manager of the "Lydia;" and at the close of a year that had been delightful and beneficial to both, Dick bore his treasure away to New York, where his prophecy respecting the feelings of the "smart set" was doubtless fulfilled.

DID IT PAY?

"SHTOP dat man! He have shtole someting!" shouted the Swedish man-of-all-work of the sutler's store, at a post in Western Kansas, on a warm August afternoon in 186-, at the same time pointing to one of two soldiers hastily crossing the space laying between the sutler's buildings and the banks of the sluggish stream which, in deep and erratic "bends," found its way past the so-called fort to the Arkansas River. The person to whom the appeal was made was the officer in command of one

of the companies composing the garrison, and the soldier pointed out as the thief was the first sergeant of his company.

“Halt! Markham! Come back here!”

As he turned to obey the order the soldier drew a bottle quickly from the breast of his coat and tossed it over the bank of the stream. But not so deftly as to escape the eye of his officer, who, stepping to the brink, saw the article lying at the edge of the water.

“Go down and get that bottle.”

The order was of course obeyed, and with the blush of shame showing in the drink-hued cheek, and with averted eyes, the culprit faced his commander.

“How did you get that?”

Fallen as he was, the man could not at once confess himself a thief, and the question was repeated in more peremptory tones before he said,—

“I took it; that’s all.”

“Go to your quarters in close arrest. Charges will be preferred against you to-morrow. You have done enough to warrant such action in your case before this act, but this is beyond endurance.”

But, on the morrow, other things claimed the attention of the officer, and the sergeant was forgotten. It was a “cholera season” on the plains, and already the Dark Angel had spread his wings over the luckless garrison, and before the dawn of the next day the officer was himself face to face with the Destroyer, while near him lay his loved ones, doomed not to outlast the day. By a seeming miracle he escaped, but convalescence was long and tedious, and before he returned from a sorrowful trip to his far Eastern home, the station of his company had

been changed, and he found it at last, at a small post in Southwestern Colorado, with a new first sergeant and Markham a private in the ranks. He was rapidly going "from bad to worse," and much of his time was passed in the guard-house, where he was confined as being the only way to keep him sober. As a prisoner he, with others in a like situation, was employed in "policing,"—*i.e.*, "cleaning up" about the post,—and in this way was brought frequently in contact with the junior members of families of officers. One of these, the post chaplain, had recently moved from an eastern station, and in a conversation with one of the sons, the culprit ascertained from whence he came, and began to ask questions; finally stating that he was from the same city. Of course the boy must tell his father, and he, having a "genealogical bent," remembered the name as that of a one-time college president, a "D.D.," who had stood high among his fellows, but was then a very aged man. Could this man be his son? The boy was instructed to ascertain, and in a day or two made his report: "Yes, he *is* Dr. M——'s son."

"Oh, the pity of it. The black sheep of the flock. How *can* he have fallen so low?" was the thought of the chaplain, followed by, "Does his father know where and what he is?" And then plans for communicating with his family began to formulate in the good man's mind. But it was a delicate thing to undertake. How was he to begin? How tell whether his information—even if he did not tell the worst—would be welcome? He had not become so debased in the course of a few weeks or months. Might he not have been turned away from home—a hopeless case—a shame and reproach to his

family? Might it not be that news of his death would be the most welcome? There appeared no hope of any reformation for him, and he seemed to have lost all ambition of an honorable kind, and the guard-house to be shunned only because when confined there he could not obtain liquor. His company-commander was soon informed of the chaplain's discovery, and they took counsel together on the subject.

"Degenerate sons of noble sires" are not *very* uncommon personages in the army, though fewer now than at that date. The case was mentioned at a casual meeting of officers in the office of the post-commander.

That individual, a cynical old fossil, who could not believe that *anything* good could be covered by the coat of an enlisted man, only sneered when possible reformation was spoken of, while another, himself raised from the ranks by exigencies of war service and displays of brute courage, and who was not *always* sober, gave expression to his views: "D——n him, let him go. I won't dry-nurse any —— man; it won't pay."

But his company-commander thought it *would* pay. Strict even to sternness in discipline, he still, under a brusque exterior, carried a warm heart, and his recent sorrows had made it beat none the less tenderly. Carefully, and after long deliberation, he penned a letter to the father, in his far-away city home, telling him how he had ascertained his relationship to the soldier, and of his own interest in him; of the little chance of his reformation at the place where he then was, and hinting that it might be best to use any influence he had to get him discharged by execution order and try to reform him at home.

The reply came in due time, written for the octogenarian father by a daughter, who, after thanking the officer for his care and sympathy, and apologizing for laying bare family troubles to a total stranger, told the story of theirs. Their "black sheep" was an only son, and had graduated at college in time to go into the war of the Rebellion, in which he had held a commission as captain. But his college life had been marked by more than one drunken orgie, and camp-life did not tend to diminish his excesses. After his return to civil life he had been furnished capital to enter business, but his dissipated habits had still clung to him, and one year sufficed to close it, a financial wreck. Expostulations and prayers seemed only to add to his recklessness, and he enlisted, after a scene with his father, which cannot well be described. He had not been heard from for months, and the family, all but the writer, had begun to think of him as dead. His name was rarely mentioned, but she, who had been "his pet sister," had never ceased to hope and pray for him. It was a letter to "bring tears to eyes unused to weep," and the officer laid it aside as one to ponder over, and to wonder how, with such love to anchor him, any man could be dashed to pieces on the rocks of dissipation.

He would make an effort to save him.

Communication with the busy world was slow and difficult, especially during the winter months, and several weeks had elapsed since the officer had written to his new correspondent. Markham had been on another spree, which had nearly ended in delirium tremens, and had confined him for some time to the hospital. He had him returned to his company, but was still pale and

"shaky," when another letter was received by his commander. If the former had been enough to touch the most obdurate heart, what could be said of the latter? Writing to one, who, though a stranger, she was sure was a sympathizer, the warm-hearted sister let her feelings have full vent, and hard, indeed, would have been the heart, and tearless the eye, which could have withstood her pleading. The recipient took one day to think of it, and then sent for the object of her prayers. Haggard and wan, with a hopeless but also defiant look, he presented himself at the quarters of the officer.

"Well, Markham, how are you getting on?"

"I'm ready for duty, sir."

"So I suppose. But what about this drinking? Are you going to keep it up?"

"I don't know."

"*Why* don't you know? You *do* know that if you keep it up it will kill you, and that before long. You know that it is constantly getting you into trouble. You know that without it you can be one of the best men in the company. Why will you not let it alone? I know your history, and you come of too good stock to fill a drunkard's grave."

The soldier had, up to this time, kept his face partially turned away, and had been looking at some out-of-door object. But at this he turned a startled look upon his questioner, and a flush spread over his wan features, while his hand grasped the back of a chair for support. Taking from his table a letter, the officer said, "Do you know that writing?"

His look was pitiable. It was only by a supreme effort that he mastered his emotion enough to say (and

then his tones were broken), "Yes, sir; it is my sister's."

"You did not know that I was corresponding with your family about you. This is not the first letter I have received, but after I had read it I determined I would not answer it till I had let you know about it, so that they could be told what you thought you could or would do. What shall I tell them? But before you answer I wish you to read the letter. You will see that you are not forgotten, but that she whom you called your 'pet sister' loves you and prays for you still. Think of that old, gray-haired father and your old mother,—heart-broken over their only boy,—and for their sakes—if not for your own—say you will reform."

By this time the once strong man was shaking like an aspen leaf. Taking the opened letter handed him he began its perusal. He had been standing, but so great was his unnerving that, fearing he would drop, he was told to be seated. For a moment he read, then, resting his head on the edge of the table by which he sat, he broke down, the letter dropped unheeded to the floor, and sob after sob shook his frame, while the other occupant of the room, the muscles of his face working suspiciously, looked with misty eyes on the scene without.

The storm at length passed, and, handing him the letter, the officer informed him that he could keep and read it at his leisure. "But," he said, "Markham, I am not talking to you now as officer to soldier, anxious to have him do better *as* a soldier, but as man to man; as one who believes that you *can* stop drinking, and hopes that you will."

There was a new look on the tear-stained face, and a new light in the eye, as he said, after some delay,—

“Captain, you are the first one who has spoken kindly to me about drinking since I came into the army. *It will be a hard fight, but I’ll stop, if I can.*”

* * * * *

It *was* “a hard fight.” He was given some light duty, which, while it did not tax his strength, kept his mind employed, and located him where he was under the eye of his company-commander several times during the day. But the change was too great. The sudden and complete withdrawal of his accustomed stimulant brought on delirium, and confined him to a hospital-cot, from which he arose gaunt and haggard at the end of two months. During that interval each of the weekly mails brought a letter from that faithful sister, some written for herself, and others, in penning which she acted as amanuensis for the aged father or mother, some addressed to him, others to his captain. The man had taken “a new lease of life.” To keep him from being troubled by some of his former associates in the company, he was placed on duty as clerk, and given a bed in the room where his work was performed.

Months had passed, when to the company-commander a letter, addressed with tremulous characters, was handed with other mail. It bore the post-mark of an Eastern office, and proved to have been written by Markham’s father. For a man of his age, writing had become almost impossible, but he wrote, he felt that he could no longer delegate to another the pleasure of thanking the man who, among his numerous duties of another kind, could find time, and had patience and faith enough,

to endeavor to assist the poor victim of appetite in, rising from the depth to which he had fallen. Did he ever visit the city? If so, he hoped that he would favor them with at least a call, that they might tell him, better than could be done by correspondence, of their gratitude.

The reduction of the army and consolidation of its regiments began in 1869, broke up that to which the officer belonged, and scattered its members, officers, and enlisted alike among others, or left them unassigned, for a time, to any. Markham was assigned to one serving at a frontier post in Kansas, and there his former commander found him, when, some months later, he was himself ordered to the same regiment, but a different company, for duty. There was a Good Templar organization in the garrison, which Markham had joined, and he came, fresh and healthy-looking, to see his old friend. He had not tasted liquor since he had given his promise, and was looking forward to going home, at the end of his enlistment, a reformed man.

But alas for human plans and hopes! His company was soon ordered to the principal post in the State, near its largest city, and he was thus removed from association with his Templar friends. Men can always be found mean enough to attempt to compass the undoing of any one struggling out of the depths of sin's quagmires, and at a soldier's picnic, soon after his arrival at his new station, he was given a glass of drugged lemonade. The incarnate devil who planned the trick had reason to be satisfied with his work. As has so often been proved in other cases, it showed that the demon was not dead, but sleeping, and in an hour Markham was helplessly drunk. He failed to return to duty when his hours of

liberty had expired, and, after a week's debauch, was found and confined to await trial by court-martial. At his trial, when asked if he had any witnesses to call or statement to make in his own behalf, he told his story, and how his fall was brought about, and was given a light sentence, which, on recommendation of the court, was wholly remitted.

But he could not go home to tell the story of his relapse. He enlisted for another term, and hearing that a party was to be sent to Southern Utah for surveying duty, went to his captain and asked to be sent with it that he might be removed from temptation, and given "another chance." His request was granted, and among the cañons and on the alkaline deserts of the Colorado River, the battle against appetite had to be fought over again. Late in the autumn he was sent with despatches to the post where he had first given his pledge for reformation, lost his way in a storm, and, "more dead than alive," was found by some Mexican shepherds, and frozen and helpless taken to his destination. All the long winter he was an inmate of the hospital, but fortunately escaped mutilation, and returned to his company to serve the remainder of his enlistment.

Meanwhile his former commander, during a leave of absence, had visited the city whence he came. But he hesitated to call on the family of the soldier, because he dreaded telling what he was sure he would be asked to give, the whole story of Markham's army life, including his recent relapse. But after a night for thought, he sent a card to the address given him, and in a short time was summoned to the reception-room of his hotel to meet his correspondents.

Tall, stately, and dignified, but with his heart shining in his face, the aged father grasped his hand, expressing his joy at seeing him, while at the same time he endeavored to pour forth his thanks. But voice failed him, and he could only say, "God bless you. I cannot tell you how happy I am to see you," a feeling in which, though silently, after the first introduction, the sister evidently fully shared.

"But you must not stop at a hotel. My house is to be your house while you remain in the city. We have a carriage at the door and will take you home with us."

Excuses would have been of no avail, and the officer soon found himself installed as guest in a pleasant home of cultured people, one filled with evidences of wealth and refinement. "How could a man with such a home fling all away for drink?" was his thought, and he dreaded the relation he knew would be asked for. How could he tell that old father, whose whole life had evidently been one of strictest integrity, that his son had fallen so low? Could he tell him of the mire through which that son had wallowed, of the low associations into which his cursed appetite had led him! He could not shock that venerable lady by a recital of the circumstances attending the relapse which had overtaken her boy, or profane the ears of those sisters with stories of his orgies. He would tell only the fact that he had fallen, risen again, and was endeavoring to fully free himself from the grip of the destroyer.

But after the dinner-hour, before the gas had been lighted in the parlors, the father drew the chairs of his wife and himself close to that of their guest, and as he

sat holding her hand in his, asked for the story. The narrator endeavored to follow the plan he had mentally sketched, but he was a bungler in deception, and his hearers were soon convinced that something was being kept back. They appreciated his motive, and did not press their questions. But it was only by the utmost exercise of his self-control that he told the tale. Before him sat the aged pair ; tears, which she made no attempt to conceal or wipe away, streamed from the eyes of the mother, as she sat with her hand tightly clasped in one of her husband's, while the other, lying on the arm of his chair, trembled as though palsied. The narrator had supposed they were the only occupants of the room, till the rustle of a skirt, behind him, betrayed the presence of another as she left it, unable to control her feelings.

It was a scene to be shortened as much as possible. They were not told of the first episode ; to know that her son had been a thief would have killed that mother. No further allusion to the matter was made by the parents during the days the officer remained their guest, but that sister could not let the subject rest. Anxiety and faith seemed by times to have possession of her mind. *Would* he wholly reform? *Could* he do so? Would he ever be able to say "no," if asked by some seeming friend to drink? These questions, and others of like import, had to be answered over and over again, sometimes looking into tear-filled eyes, at others at a face bright with faith and hope.

The memory of that father's benediction still abides with its recipient, and the parting words of the mother—"Tell my son, for me, of a mother's love and prayers for

him"—was supplemented by those of that other loving heart,—“Tell him that my prayers go up for him daily, and that I pray, believing that I shall be heard.”

More than a year passed before the son was seen by him to whom the messages were intrusted. But there had been no more relapses; and when they did meet, the soldier had served out his enlistment, and, happy in anticipation of returning to his home, came to thank his friend for what he had done for him. His father had died, one of his last messages to absent ones being to the son, telling him of his anxiety for him, and of his faith in his permanent reformation. As he shook hands with the departing one, and wished him a happy future, and saw him leave full of spirit and energy, the officer turned into his tent soliloquizing, “Thank God that I did it; it *has* paid, many times over.”

* * * * *

Four or five months had passed, the campaign was closed, and troops were again at their stations, when, on visiting the orderly-room of his company, after guard-mounting, the captain found Markham there awaiting him, with notice of his enlistment and order to report for duty. Contrary to usual custom, he had not been held at the rendezvous to await the forwarding of a detachment, but had been sent alone to join his company.

He had been heard from but once since he left, but then he had stated that he had an offer of business, which he thought he would accept, and that all had gone well with him thus far. Taking him aside, the officer asked why he had again enlisted.

“I did not dare to stay out. Almost as soon as I reached the city I met two or three of my former friends,

and was at once asked to drink. Thank God, I could say, 'No!' But day after day, as I met others, the invitation was repeated. Sometimes nothing was said, at others my refusal was met by sneers. I passed the doors of places where I had formerly gone to drink, and I found myself saying, 'There can be no harm in going in,' and each time I passed the temptation became stronger. One day I had half unconsciously turned and entered the door-way, but the sight of a drunken man inside turned me back. But from that time I knew I was not safe, and my mother's advice was to enlist and come to you ; and here I am."

Two years had passed. There had been no return to his old habits, and Markham was wearing the chevrons of a sergeant. The appalling disaster of the Little Horse had called his regiment, with others, to the far Northwest, where, for long and weary months, every officer and enlisted man was busy. At length, one cold autumn morning, the foe they had followed for days was brought to bay, and from the rocky fastness in which he had taken refuge was making a desperate fight. More than a score of his pursuers had already fallen, and any exposure was sure to draw a deadly fire, when the company to which Markham belonged was ordered to seize and hold a more advanced position, and when it had been attained, the officer in command was to signal the fact to another, whose movement was then to commence. This would bring the first company almost up to the muzzles of the rifles of the enemy, and the movement had to be made with the utmost caution. The men crept forward, sheltered as much as possible by the inequalities of the ground, but to enable him to see when to give the

desired signal the officer was forced to rise to his feet. In a moment he dropped, shot through the body. Markham was near, and at once crawled up to him.

Recognizing the desperate nature of his injury, he handed the sergeant his watch, diary, and other valuables, gasped out some directions for their disposal, and bade his *protégé* farewell.

"But I'm going to get you away from here, sir; don't give up yet."

"No," the wounded man gasped; "you will be hit if you attempt it. I am done for; don't have any one hurt trying to get me off."

But the brave fellow was obdurate. Tearing away the clothing, he sought to stanch the flow of blood, though every time he raised his head it became the target for leaden hail, meanwhile sending another soldier creeping to the rear for a blanket in which to bear away his charge. But when it was brought it could not be utilized as a litter without presenting a group as a target, and, rising to his knees, the sergeant drew it carefully under the body of his officer, and wrapping it about him took him in his arms as he would an infant, rose to his feet, and started to the rear. Bullets hissed and hummed about him, his clothing was penetrated in half a score of places, blood trickled from a wounded arm, but still he kept on, on till, in a depression where they were safe from fire, he found the surgeon with his improvised hospital. His own hurt proved not to be serious, though it forbade his return to the fight, and as soon as it was dressed he devoted himself to the care of his friend. With the night came a storm, almost arctic in its intensity. The last face recognized by the officer ere he lapsed into un-

consciousness, thought by every one to be the end, was that of the faithful Markham. Through all the long hours of storm and darkness the soldier had no shelter; his only blanket had been used to make one for his friend, dying, as he supposed, amid the raging of the elements, and when near noon of the next day, and to the surprise of every one, consciousness returned, his voice was the first to welcome him back to life, and his hand to minister to his wants.

By courier to the nearest post, and thence on wings of the lightning, went news of the fight, with lists of killed and wounded. Back by the same medium came anxious inquiries; among others, from the sergeant's family asking not only about himself, but for the results of his officer's wounds; and by the time the distant post was reached, letters for both, full of love for the one, and thankfulness for the escape of both from death, were there also.

* * * * *

Years have come and gone. Among the hills of Northern New Jersey, embowered in vines and surrounded by acres devoted to small-fruit culture, stands Markham's cottage home. His mother, spared long enough to again welcome her son, has passed away. The sister, whose love had never failed or faltered, lives not far away, absorbed in new cares. His head is prematurely gray, and his face shows traces of his early dissipation; but his eye is bright and clear, and his steps firm. Children climb about his knees and call for stories of his soldier-life. His wife knows all; for, as he told his former commander when he visited him, he thought he could not keep anything back from her and be happy.

“The drink fiend” has departed; the prayers of parents and sister have been answered.

The officer who thought it would pay to try to save him still lives; and others, though in a lesser degree, have cause to bless his care for their reformation. He who sneered at the idea of reforming a drunken soldier after an exhibition of both physical and moral cowardice at a crisis when much depended upon his capacity and firmness was set aside as of no value; and he who would “not dry-nurse any drunken soldier” himself fills a drunkard’s grave.

Did it pay?

HOW RUFUS SHINGLEDECKER CAME TO GO TO SEA.

PECULIAR characters have not been lacking in the varied personnel of our navy. Every officer can recall instances of “queer fish” that have come under personal observation. Long Tom Coffin, whose actual personality Mr. Clark Russell seems to question, was not a whit more eccentric than many an old quarter-gunner or boat-swain’s-mate whose excellence in professional quality outweighed their erratic traits.

Rufus Shingledecker, quartermaster on board the United States “Fly-a-Way,” was one of these, a man who could be trusted in any sailor-like task, reliable, honest, and self-reliant, but with all as odd a bundle of inconsistencies as could be imagined. To begin with, he was an unlikely object to be judged a sailor. He was tall, gaunt, and erect, without any of the shambling gait or awk-

ward roll so popularly attributed to the seaman. Lantern-jawed, long-haired, and generally rustic in appearance, his face shone with good-natured humor and kindness within the fringe of gray whiskers that surrounded it. Without being a "sailor-dandy," he was scrupulously neat in his dress, his only deviation from a strictly nautical costume being a huge silver watch, of which outward evidences were a huge fob-chain and seal.

His name was a perpetual source of annoyance to him. Had he been less honest he would have been known as "John Smith 5th," or more equally handy title, usually chosen by sailors desiring to conceal their own identity. His name was too nearly "Single-decker" to miss the witticisms current about decks; and the inevitable local rhymester had added a verse to a popular sea-song, dragging in this name and identifying it with Rufus. But these jibes never ruined his temper, and a certain dignity of manner kept away the smaller fry that might have made him ridiculous at times.

Rufus was a popular man among the young officers. Without abating in any way the due amount of respect exacted by these, he managed in many ways to smooth the path of duty for them, and to assist to tide them over some perilous juncture. He would slip up quietly to the young watch-officer and modestly remark, as one who had just casually observed the circumstance, "That to'gallant sail makes her pitch, sir; don't it?" or, "Them royals makes her steer wild, sir!" or some similar information calculated to warn the young men of the necessity of reducing sail, which only a certain false professional pride had kept him from doing. He would not shield a midshipman from discovery during a stolen nap

in a night-watch, but various kindly offices fully atoned for this venal offence.

He was a sailor of the old school, whose maxim in navigation, the three "L's" (lead, log, and latitude), might be supplemented by another in seamanship, the three "H's" (haul, heave, and hurry). His usefulness in these piping times of peace, when warlike instruments are forged anew, would be extremely doubtful. Perfect in the old accomplishments, from the steering of the ship to the making of a cap, the new order of things perplexed him greatly. The dynamos were a continual menace; he disapproved greatly of the new machine-moved guns; predicted complete disaster to the ship which should venture into action without reserve sail-power; and doubted if the ram would not injure her own frame more than the enemy's upon impact.

These peculiarities of character were known to all the ship, but there was another point in which Rufus differed from the typical sailor that was not so readily noticeable. He evidently had no love for the female sex. This was made apparent in many ways to the close observer. He had been known on more than one occasion, when ladies were on board, to "swap" watches, so as to remain away from the after-part of the ship, where alone females are permitted to congregate. If a boat came near with ribbons fluttering in it, he reported, "Ladies in that boat sir," and withdrew at once to the farthest reach of poop out of notice.

Almost his only "growl" was indulged in when it became necessary to "dress" the ladders for lady visitors, and decorations for a party on board, when he was expected to provide the flags, completely unsettled him for a day.

Rufus was not given to confidences regarding himself, and I should have perhaps remained ignorant of the cause of all this perverse distaste for the female presence, so unusual to the sailor, had it not been that he overheard some *badinage* among some of the officers about certain wounds supposed to have been received by me in an *affaire du cœur*. I had already encouraged him to chat occasionally, and was always entertained by the rugged honesty, quaintness, and soundness of many of his notions and ideas. One beautiful night, during a gentle "midwatch," he gave me the story of his life, which I here relate much in his own words.

"I've told you before, sir, that I was raised a farmer, in one of the Western States. I wasn't like most of the neighbor-boys,—who hankered to get to the city, or go abroad, or somethin' else than stay on the farm. I was well enough satisfied where I was, and grew up, calculatin' to always stay a farmer. When I was goin' on twenty-one, I fell in love with a neighbor's darter, who was the likeliest girl in the hull country. I got to thinkin' a great deal of her, an' as I was (excuse me for sayin' it myself) a rather good-lookin' lad, and able to hold my own, it was plain sailin' for a while with me, and Rosy Jenkins (which was a fitting name for her, since her cheeks were red as roses) promised to marry me soon as I had a home ready. I got to work, farmin' a forty my father gave me, and finally rentin' and then buyin' forty more joinin' it, and all the time workin' for to get the home I wanted. Meanwhile, I only saw Rosy regularly on Sundays, which I spent at Mr. Jenkins's, goin' home from church with her, on the same spring-seat in the light wagon, besides maybe once or twice in

the week meetin' her at a party, or in fair, or corn-husk-in'. She had other fellers, but I didn't care much for that, although I didn't feel so good as if I had been with her, but I had her promise, and had no thought of doubtin' her.

"Things went on this way a couple of years, and I had paid for my new forty, and had money enough saved up to build a neat little house, when, one day, as I was drivin' past her house, a certain neighbor woman, who knowed me from a boy, stopped me, and said, 'Ruf, you are the biggest fool ever lived. Rose Jenkins is nice as sugar when you're around, but everybody but you in the hull township sees that she is mighty taken with that young photogry feller that comes around here in his car, stayin' nobody knows what for, since he don't take a picture once in a week. You had better take an old neighbor's warnin', and get the young woman soon as you can.'

"I whipped up my horses, kinder mad at her presumin' to say that Rosy was not true to me; but after a little I got to thinkin' that perhaps what she said might be worth regardin', anyway, though I didn't believe she would play me false; and it made me sick to think of it. You see, sir, I'd got to thinkin' a great deal of her, and it seemed as if I couldn't bear to think of losin' her. The young feller spoken of was one of those city fellers, a sort of lady's man, that I had seen a few times, and once with Rosy. He weren't the kind of feller you could quarrel with, for he was a little insignificant sort of cuss, and he was so perlite, and kept away from all the boys, who didn't like him at all, to seek the company of the girls. After thinkin' the matter over that night, I made

up my mind to ask Rosy to marry me in three months, calculatin' that I could get our little home ready by that time, with some help I knew I could get from my father.

"Well, when I saw her, she just laughed at me for supposin' there was anything wrong, and her winsome ways made me think she was in earnest, I was so fond of her. She said that she couldn't be expected to keep out of company for so long a time, and when young men asked her to go to places, where she knew I couldn't go, she was doin' no harm in goin' with them, so long as I didn't suffer from it. After that, I hadn't any thought of doubtin' her, but worked the harder to get my home ready, for she said she would marry me when that was done. Meanwhile, I saw her more than before. Sometimes she would come down with me, in my new buggy, and we would go inside the frame of the half-built house, and plan what happy times we would have when it was finished. She would say she must have this and that to furnish the rooms, and I would promise it. But I can't talk much about that time, sir, for those were the happiest days I ever knew. Sometimes I couldn't help hearin' what people said about Rosy's bein' fond of company, and gayety, and so forth, but I thought that was nateral, and, so long as I had her promise, I needn't worry much about it. The neighbor woman who had spoken to me before tried to stop me again, but I wouldn't hear what she had to say, thinkin' it only gossip.

"As the time passed by, I noticed some of my friends kinder lookin' as though they wanted to tell me somethin', but I shut my eyes and ears to all of them, preferrin' to trust Rosy. She made me a little uneasy now, for she would pout and get vexed at the least little thing,

which she had never done before, and once or twice, when I wanted her to ride down to the farm for me, she said she couldn't go, as she had too much sewin' to do. I thought this was true, for it was now only two weeks to our weddin'-day, and she must be gettin' ready. I didn't know till long afterwards that she had already promised to go to town to a party. I didn't like these kind o' public parties they had at the hall in town, and she never told me she was goin'; but then I never asked her about them. I saw her nearly every day now, generally about noon-spell, when I could take time to drive over to her father's, and I must say now that she seemed less loving every day. It worried me a good deal, but I thought maybe it was a girl's sort of bashfulness, you know, and maybe she was thinkin' more of her weddin' things than of me, as I had heard girls would do.

“Meanwhile everything was ready for us to be married the next week. My home was done, and I had furnished it as well as I could without gettin' in debt, and Rosy had seen it and seemed satisfied with it, although not so delighted as I thought maybe she might be. We was to be married at her father's, and to go to housekeepin' right away; and there was to be an infare at my father's house the next week. I thought now that I was almost settled in life, and that I would be content and happy with a wife of my choice, who I had loved so long. I was kept pretty busy about this time, and didn't see Rosy, although I thought I saw her in a buggy and span with a young man, one evening about dusk,—knowin' her by her red ribbons. I worked pretty late about my farm, and went home to father's as usual every night. One night, about five days before the time set for our

weddin', I came home quite late, feelin' tired and out of sorts, for many things had gone wrong, and I had got cheated out of goin' to see Rosy, on account of a steer that had got mired in a slough. My mother was settin' up waitin' for me,—a thing very unusual. When she saw how tired I was she seemed to hesitate a while, but finally drew her chair up near mine, and said,—

“ ‘Rufus, you never knew much about young girls and their ways, and I have hoped and thought that you were going to get one you could trust, and who would make you a happy wife ; but I am afraid, my boy, you are going to be disappointed. Now don't stop me, for I must tell you some things I have seen and heard, and what I think about them. Rosa is not acting well. She should be devoting her time to you and your welfare, but she is gayer and more frivolous each day, and seems to be possessed with an idea that she must gad about everywhere now, as if she would be tied down at home after you are married. I would speak to her about it, my son.’

“ My mother went out as she said this, leaving me to think about it. What worried me most was that my mother was not a talkative woman nor a gossip, and, on account of having gone to boarding-school, felt herself a little above some of the farmers' wives in the neighborhood, and didn't visit them much. I knew she would never have said this to me, if some one or more than one had not come to her and told her things. I didn't think that she might mean to warn me of somethin' more, and I don't know yet as she did. Well, I went to see Rosy at noon the next day, and the first thing I saw when I came in sight of the house was that little, insignificant

photograph man I had been warned of. Rosy seemed kind of flustered, but was in great spirits, and more like her old self than she had been for a long time. She said she was going to have her last girl picture taken, and that was what she was fixin' with the young man. I asked her if the regular artist in town couldn't as well take her picture, but she said no, he always made a fright of her. I didn't want to quarrel, so I said no more then, but before I went away, I asked her if she was still ready to marry me in three days. She made many pretty little motions and flutterings, but finally made me happy by saying, 'Yes, of course, you old goose; what else?' I went away clean forgetting to ask her if she wouldn't stay away from parties now till we married. I was too happy in believin' her true, to question her, or to doubt her in any way. Hadn't I known her all my life! and didn't I believe that she was a good, faithful, honest girl, a little giddy now, but fond enough of me to be happy after we were once married?

"Well, the time passed, and my weddin'-day came at last. I went to town in the mornin', early enough to miss any of the boys who would be sure to plague me, and got my new clothes and a clean shave. I got home about noon, and was drivin' around to father's barn to put up my team of colts, when my father called to me, 'Don't put 'em up yet, your mother wants to see you right away!' My heart sunk at once, and I rushed into the house without even tying my team. Mother was lyin' on the sofa, crying as if her heart would break. I knelt down by her, fearful of bad news, and so soon as she could, she told me, betwixt her sobs, that Rosy had run off that mornin' with the young photographer, and

that they had gone to a town some miles away, it was thought, to get married. Mr. Jenkins had gone after them, but his farm team would never overtake them. I rushed out at once, jumped into the buggy, only hearing my father's, 'Be cautious, my boy!' and drove at the top of my speed towards the town of A——. My mind was all in a whirl, and I drove like mad, nearly running into some teams, my wild young colts flying over the dusty road. I don't know what I should have done if I had overtaken them. Bad thoughts for him were in my heart, and some not kindly for her.

"But just before I reached A—— I met Mr. Jenkins, and stopped at sight of his haggard old face. I had always been a favorite of his'n, and he cursed and swore terribly about the damned cuss who had run off with his little gal, but told me it was maybe not too late yet for me to save her from him, and he would advise me to drive right on to her aunt's, where she had gone, to wait a few days before marrying the unprincipled cuss she had run off with. Mr. Jenkins said he couldn't coax her to come back, but he thought she would listen to me. So I drove on, half-hearted, to undertake the job. I felt, even now, that she was false, and didn't much believe that she would listen to me.

"Well, the aunt tried to keep me from seeing her, but I wouldn't be put off, and made my way into the settin'-room, where she was, crying as though her heart would break. I broke down at this, and cried a little, too, perhaps, for I never could stand her sobs and tears, even when she was a little girl. Well, I talked to her, not about our weddin', nor about our home, nor my disappointment, but just pointed out to her that she was

doin' wrong, and ought to go back to her mother, and wait there, and then I said, 'Rosy, I thought I could never part with you, but if you think you love any other man better than me, it is better to know it now than some other time. You can have time to think it over, and, if you decide against me, I will give you up.' I turned away and left the house, not being able to say any more. She called her aunty, and, just as I was about to drive away, they came out, asked me to wait, and then Rosy got into my buggy and went back home with me. It was a sorrowin' trip. She did nothin' but sob and cry, huddled up in one corner of the buggy, and begged me not to talk to her.

"Well, it was over at last, and I left her at her father's home, and went home, gettin' there just about the time I was to have been married. The neighbors had all been told the weddin' was postponed, and so I found my mother and father alone at home. Both tried to cheer me up, but mother was indignant that I had given Rosy a day to make up her mind. 'Hasn't she had all these years to do it in?' she said. But I wouldn't hear anything against her, preferring to wait, although sick at heart myself.

"Well, the third day come, but no Rosy. Her mother came over, and said she had had a letter from the young man, promisin' to come and get her, and that no more could be got out of Rosy than that she should wait for him. I giv' up entirely on hearin' this, and went down to my place. I sat down in the home, and thought things over. My heart was very sore, but I wasn't mad at Rosy; just pityin' like, and makin' allowance for her. I always knowed she liked parties and gayety, and this

was what had led her to choose the other man, who could take her to such places. But I had loved her so long, and had been so long thinkin' that she was mine, that it was hard to give her up. By-and-by, I began to get harder about it, and to think that I had been treated badly. I got sore against Rosy, thinkin' about it, and against all women, for I thought them all alike now. A promise was a promise, anyhow, and Rosy had seemed to care little for hers when the time came. A man would even carry out a bad bargain, and I was just that much disappointed that I would have taken her, even knowin' that she didn't think so much of me.

"But now it was all over, and what was I to do? I had worked to get my house and farm for her, and now I hated it. I couldn't stay there, and have folks pityin' me, and as I thought more and more of how badly Rosy had acted, I got harder and harder against her and all women. I just thought I would like to go away where no one knowed me, and as I resolved on this, I said to myself, Why not where there are no women? The more I thought on it, the better it seemed, so mad was I at the whole sex.

"I thought about those fellows I had read about, who went into the deserts or forests and lived as hermits, and thought at first that I would go away into the far West, where there was none of the female sex, but I bethought me that they would come there in the course of time, and besides, I didn't care to live among such rough men just to get away from women. I thought I might go to some foreign country where I wouldn't know the language, but then I remembered *that* wouldn't long matter. I would learn it, and, besides, the women would be

there all the same, and maybe wouldn't need the language.

"Finally, I made up my mind to go to sea, where one needn't see women at all, and where they would never come. After I had made up my mind to this, I got to thinkin' again, and my heart felt very sore against Rosy, when, all of a sudden, she came in at the door, her eyes all red (and her cheeks redder than ever) with crying, her shoes all dusty, and her dress not so neat as usual. I just sat still, not knowin' what to say or do. She came up kind o' timid to me, and said, kinder sobbin'-like and very softly, 'Rufus, I will marry you!' I asked her to sit down and get composed, and when she had done so, I said, 'Rosalie, you know, after all that has past, we would never be happy; maybe it was a mistake, after all. I won't hold you to your word, and will go away where you will never see me again.' She burst out sobbin' as if her heart would break, and declared she would try to make me a good wife, but I would not hear of it. Well, after a long talk and a walk to her home, I told her parents my decision, and they seemed to think I had good reason for it, but I said they mustn't blame Rosy, for maybe we weren't so well suited as we thought.

"Well, I sold my things, and paid my old father what I owed him, and started from home with the rest. My mother tried to keep me, and it was hard to leave her, but finally I got away. I went straight to town, and put all my money in the bank, exceptin' enough to take me to New York, and a little more. Then I went to a lawyer that I had known a long time, and asked him to draw up a will, leavin' all this money to Rosy, in case she didn't get married within five years, which he did.

You see, I suspicioned the mean feller wouldn't marry her now, and the young folks in the neighborhood would avoid her for awhile, and I didn't want the money, which I intended always for her comfort.

"I came to New York, and was lucky enough to get into the navy instead of the merchant service, and here I am, sir, grown old in it. I have heard from home two or three times since I left it. Rosy didn't marry right away; she got the money I left her, but I heerd some years afterwards that a rich farmer had married her. I hope she did well, sir, for I think she was a good girl."

The end of the watch came just at the termination of the honest man's story, and we both were soon below in our beds. For my part, I lay thinking what a curious character Rufus showed, too honest and straightforward, with his overstrained ideas of right and wrong. I respected the old fellow for his kind treatment of the recreant lass, while I blamed him for his Quixotic decision. His was one of these natures that make anchorites and such like folk, and his better choice of some useful profession was to his credit.

Some weeks passed, and we changed our berth to the anchorage off "Old Point Comfort," where the occasional dissipation and gayety afforded by the parties at the Hygeia Hotel and at the fort greatly relieved the monotony of our ship routine.

Old Rufus shut himself up closer than ever here, but was compelled occasionally to take a watch when ladies were on board. What he did when he went ashore, no one seemed to know. He never joined the drinkers, and usually separated from the party who attended him, strolling off into the country by himself.

One afternoon, towards the end of the watch, when Rufus and I were again associated on duty, a small yacht came alongside, and permission was asked for the occupants to visit the ship, which was readily accorded. There were perhaps a dozen in the party, whom I recognized as some Western people who had been pointed out to me at the hotel. One couple was particularly noticeable. The husband was a weazened little fellow, evidently ill at ease in his mock sailor clothes (he owned the yacht I afterwards heard). The woman was tall and stout, and had evidently been rather pretty at one time, but there was a petulant, querulous expression on her face that would have spoiled a much younger and handsomer face. She was evidently the master or rather the mistress, and ruled with a strong hand. She had no confidence in her husband's sailor qualities, for she would allow no one but an officer to hand her out of the boat and on deck. Such duty having fallen to my lot, I proceeded to walk the lady up and down the deck, explaining that I could not go below, being on duty.

"And is that queer fellow yonder on watch, too," said she, in the harshest of tones, pointing to old Rufus, who had, as usual, retired to the poop-deck. Something in her voice caused the old man to look around, when, greatly to my astonishment, he dropped the long spy-glass, of which he usually took the greatest care, turned hastily around and walked forward as far as the main-mast, to the utter neglect of duty usually performed with the greatest zeal. I suspected at once that he had recognized the lady as some acquaintance of his boyhood and feared recognition on her part.

The party soon went below deck, and old Rufus then

approached me, his face ashy pale, and said, "It's her, sir; it's Rosy herself." I was moved at the old fellow's evident disturbance, sent for another quartermaster, and had Rufus relieved from duty. Contrary to his usual custom, he hung about the gangway, and when the shore-party, after a visit of an hour or so, departed, he watched them stealthily from a concealed point. The lady evidently had no thought of his identity, nor did her conduct, as she quitted the ship, leave any pleasant remembrance in the mind of her quondam lover. She was exceedingly snappish and virulent towards her liege lord, and it required much masculine urging and feminine pleading to induce her to set foot again on the little yacht, which she declared she detested. It was quite evident that the temper as well as the face of the little rosy-cheeked country-maiden had considerably aged. The yacht pushed off, drifted astern, and passed close under our stern, watched by a crowd of our midshipmen, who had discovered some attractive Western beauties among the number. As she drifted around our stern, a sudden flow of wind caught the mainsail, the boom jibbed about, and instantly half a dozen forms of men and women were in the water. A scene of confusion occurred, during which it was hard to say what did really take place, but I distinctly heard, and so did old Rufus, the sharp tones of the mature Rosy, crying out, as she sank under the counter of the yacht, "Rufus, Rufus, save me!" The whole party was rescued in five minutes, and all were ashore and dry in less than half an hour, but the yacht and its owner disappeared during the night, and I never knew whether his name, too, was Rufus, or whether the recreant heart of the country lass returned in the

moment of danger to its old lover, whose identity could not be concealed from her sharp eyes, although she would not acknowledge it. As to Rufus, he seemed much more content with life; was not quite so distrustful of the female sex, and was even known to entertain some of tender years in a surreptitious way.

THE OLD "ACADEMIC."

“‘The moon looks down on old Cro’ nest,
She mellows the shade on his shaggy breast,
And seems——’”

“YES, old fellow, that’s true, there’s the moon and Cro’ nest and the ‘silver cone on the wave below,’ but isn’t that aforesaid quotation just a little hackneyed? Remember, my dear Archer, the occasions, not few, on which you must have gotten it off yourself, in such a night as this,—forgive me, do, and imagine, if you can, the thousands of times it has been gotten off by callow youths and tender maidens from this very piazza. Jove! just think, mathematically computed——”

“That will do, Mac; I’m nipped in the bud and will offend no more, even if the moon, shimmering on the water yonder, lighten all the hidden poetry within my soul,” was the laughing answer.

The piazza alluded to was that surrounding the old Post Hotel at West Point; the two friends leaning against the railing, brother officers and classmates of some half-dozen years back. They had been chums

through their four years of cadet-life, and the friendship was a close one. A guitar was heard from a group at the farther end of the piazza, disconnected chords, and a subdued humming.

"You are evidently wanted there, Jack," said McLaren; "they know that will fetch you."

"Well, we'll wait and see," said Archer, laughing, and the next moment his name was called.

"That's the penalty one pays for being popular," murmured McLaren, pulling at his dark moustache, but following his friend not unwillingly, for to hear John Archer sing was compensation for being deprived of his undistributed self.

McLaren, or Mac, as he was called by his intimates, had been at the Point on duty for four years, and surely no young, good-looking, unmarried second lieutenant could be more popular, and he knew it too.

John Archer, on furlough, was spending a few of his precious days with officer friends, and Damon and Pythias were again together. Archer possessed most of the qualities which attract both men and women. He was not a hero to be worshipped, nor an Apollo to languish over, though he was manly as a soldier should be and undeniably handsome. Then, too, he had a charm of speech and manner which were as natural to him as the Southern air he had breathed in his boyhood. Just now, the first of July, when the number of officers was small, his presence was hailed with joy. The mess, of course, had to be broken up and the bachelor officers went to the hotel for their meals, except when they found favor and hospitality with the ladies at the Post. The June tide of visitors that floods the Point during

graduation week had ebbed and the second influx had not yet come. In the meantime, however, the hotel was not empty; the cadet season had begun.

"Now then, Archer, you can't refuse us on such a glorious night?" This from the group the two men had joined.

"Nor will I, Captain Anderson," readily replied Archer, accepting the guitar from his superior officer. "Mac here won't let me quote poetry, so I'm willing to take my revenge."

"And charm his ears and ours," returned Captain Anderson.

"And fairer ones, too, perhaps, eh, Morton?" added a tall cavalryman, throwing away his cigar and settling himself comfortably.

The young fellow thus addressed, a new graduate, laughed good-naturedly. "Oh, my star reached its zenith last camp and set some two weeks back."

"I fear Miss Lawrence is fickle," put in McLaren. "What's the matter, John?" to Archer, who in tuning the guitar had snapped a string. "Strings feel the heat?"

"Pray, who may this divinity be?" asked Archer, lightly, disregarding the question.

"Last summer," continued McLaren, "Norton would have told you that Miss Lawrence was the most charming girl, the prettiest dancer, and the belle *par excellence* of the Post. Ah me! we've all been through first class camp."

"And I still say the same," answered Norton. "The fact that I've doffed the cadet-gray with the buttons' flashing gleam detracts in no way from Miss Lawrence's powers of fascination. But she is emphatically a 'cadet

girl,' and I now have donned the army-blue, so farewell to my greatness. At the present moment Miss Lawrence is leaning on a gray arm. They started for camp some time ago." And now the guitar was tuned, and after a short prelude Archer began. Song after song he sang, sweet melodies of the South, gay airs with a chorus in which the others joined, till finally he dropped into the dainty German lieder which he loved and sang the best.

A woman of the world twice his years had once said to Archer, coming forward with outstretched hands as he finished a song sweeter than all others, "Ah, if I were twenty!" And indeed the young man had sung his way into the hearts of many and left there strains of music which seemed to have been awakened to echo forever. He was an artist in his way, and his songs were a part of him.

There was no one else on the piazza except two ladies who had come out a little while ago and sat in the farther corner. They seemed to be strangers and were very quiet, evidently listening with musical appreciation, as who could help it who had a soul! One of them, all in white, sat slightly turned from the group and partly in shadow, but two or three times she looked carelessly over her shoulder with a graceful turn of the head, and those who caught the motion saw in the full moonlight that the face was young and lovely.

"A new arrival," thought McLaren, and with his cap tipped down he watched. By degrees an idea formed in his mind, took root, and, as the girl turned again, blossomed into full conviction. He glanced at Archer, who appeared to have forgotten every presence, and who, with his head thrown slightly back and his gaze fastened

on the silver-misted hills, seemed to be weaving into melody the beauty of the night.

His brown eyes shown darker still in the moonlight, and his fair hair, pushed back with his cap, gave him his boyish look of a few years ago. A half-sad expression stole over his face, and, changing his accompaniment to a rhythmic ripple, he sang very softly a song unsung for years, a little German lied of love and parting. His voice lingered caressingly on the refrain, "Liebchen, ade, scheiden thut weh." As the last note faded on the air there was a slight rustle at the end of the piazza, and the girl in white flitted quickly round the house, followed more slowly by her companion. McLaren noticed the departure, quiet as it was, and felt surer than ever of his first-received impression. And now Archer rose, and all knew there would be no more music.

"You have given us great pleasure, Archer," said Captain Anderson, heartily. "I for one shall not soon forget this evening; it is one to be remembered."

"And I," returned the young man, "shall certainly never forget it if I have given you so great pleasure." And he never did.

"Jack, old man," said McLaren, "it's not late, and I have a call to make at the south end of quarters. Come along and I'll introduce you to the jolliest little woman in the Post."

"And her fair guest," ventured Norton.

Archer agreed to the proposition; the two friends said good-night. They took their way across the grassy plain, fresh and smooth and velvety as it always is, Archer carrying his guitar, now encased in green flannel, and which he was to leave at their quarters on the way. He

loved this instrument; it had been his mother's, who gave it to him when he left home to report at West Point. Many were the hours it had cheered him in barracks when "Math." and "Phil." did not press too heavily, or on summer nights in camp, with the fellows gathered round him.

"That's a lovable fellow," said Mr. Ormsby, the tall cavalryman, as the two officers left.

"You mean Archer?" said Captain Anderson. "Yes, that's the word; he's lovable and he's a fine fellow too. I've always known the family: lovely woman, his mother, and his father is a true type of the Southern gentleman."

"He's evidently a favorite with the ladies," went on Norton, "judging from the look of things last evening."

"Oh," said Captain Anderson, with a laugh, "that's the natural consequence of the boy's devotion of manner to every woman he meets, whether she's young or not. Any one who didn't know him might accuse him of being in love with half a dozen different girls at a time. It's his way, and a charming one it is too. But for all that," continued the captain, "he's a fine fellow, and as true as steel. Lucky the girl who wins him."

"I thought he was engaged," said Mr. Ormsby.

"There was something of the kind," answered Captain Anderson. "Seems to me I heard,—well, the fact is, I don't know much about it."

Then the talk fell on other things.

"The old building is really going," said Norton; "they've done quite some work in demolishing."

"It's really been unfit for some time," said Captain Anderson; "yet, ugly and prosaic as it is, I almost feel sorry to see it go. Many associations will go with it."

But it has served a full half-century. May the new Academic educate as many heroes within its walls as this old one has done !"

I.

Across the plain the two friends were walking in silence. The spirit of quiet seemed to have fallen upon them, but these two knew each other so well that speech was not always necessary, each following out the other's train of thought with the aid of a spoken word now and again. McLaren knew what was coming and waited. Finally Archer said,—

"This Miss Lawrence they were speaking of, Mac, is it——"

"No, old fellow, she is not the same, nor, so far as I know, is she any relation. Miss Kitty was here for the first time a year ago, and victimized Norton last camp."

Archer drew a long breath. "I thought it possible, you know. She was very young then, and there was nothing so unlikely in it."

"No, of course not." Then, after a pause, "What was the trouble between you, Jack? I never understood what separated you."

"And I do not now, Mac, after six years. I only know that something came between us,—a cloud that shut out daylight for many long days."

"But could she give no reason for this? It seems strange, she was so devoted to you."

"I know nothing of what caused the change; surely she loved me. Her letters stopped all at once. I wrote again and again, imploring for some explanation; not a line came. I've never seen her since."

Archer's voice grew husky; the feelings lulled into quiet through these years had been awakened to-night. The mere mention of a name, to him inseparably connected with this place, had laid bare a train of memories that brought the past with painful distinctness before him.

"Did you try to see her?" asked Mac.

"Yes, I got a short leave; she was away from home. Soon after, I received her engagement ring and a line asking for the key to the bracelet I had locked on her arm."

"It seems unaccountable to me," said McLaren. "Of course, engagements are made and broken every day, but it was unlike her to change so utterly without giving the shadow of an explanation. Who knows? it may come all right yet."

"After all these years? No, Mac; I hope she has forgotten me, as I have tried to forget her."

"But she has not forgotten," thought McLaren; "she certainly recognized him a while ago. Why did she leave so suddenly after that song? Was it annoyance, or does she care? I'll not tell him to-night. I had no idea he felt it so much after all this."

"I'll call here some other time, Mac; I'll not go in with you now," said Archer, as they reached the Reese's gate.

"All right, my boy, take possession of the fort; I'll join you before long."

The Reese's was a popular house, and McLaren was a special favorite with little Mrs. Reese. But just now the attraction was the "fair guest" hinted at by Norton, which fact Mac had made rather evident, thereby causing Mrs. Reese immense satisfaction.

This evening, Miss Ruth Girton, looking her prettiest,

was quite in the mood to receive as her just due full measure of devotion from the dashing cavalryman. But there seemed to be something the matter; he had never been so indifferent, and, finally, in the midst of a most thrilling story, Miss Girton stopped suddenly and exclaimed, "You don't look one bit interested and haven't heard one word! I'm going to talk to Mr. Lester." And in spite of McLaren's earnest entreaties, the girl, from mere pique, beamed upon the tiresome but delighted Lester the rest of the evening.

Then Mrs. Reese came to the rescue: "I'm going to scold you; your friend has been here three days and you've not brought him here yet."

"Oh, come now, Mrs. Reese, three days! Jack got here late Tuesday evening."

"And this is Thursday; but we won't quarrel. What I want to say is this. I'm going to have some people here to-morrow evening; you'll find a note from me when you get back. Be sure to come and bring Mr. Archer."

"I answer for both of us."

"Kitty Lawrence has consented to forego cadets for one evening, so she's coming; and she's promised me a charming addition in her cousin."

"Her cousin!"

"Yes, she only arrived this evening; so you don't know her, nor do I. But I'm going to call to-morrow morning. Kitty says she's musical and plays superbly."

"What's her name?" asked McLaren, through whose mind was flashing the light of possibilities.

"Lawrence,—Margaret Lawrence."

McLaren was a quick thinker; his course was decided

upon. They were at the end of the room, apart from the others.

"Mrs. Reese," he said, abruptly, "you are a true friend, aren't you?"

"I hope so," answered the little woman, somewhat puzzled.

"And you are interested in love-affairs, and all that sort of thing, aren't you?" he went on, earnestly.

Mrs. Reese thought she understood, and glanced at Ruth in the bay-window, and then sympathetically at her favorite.

"Of course, my dear fellow, you may trust me."

"It's not a case of 'John Alden,' but of John Archer, and the thing is rather reversed, do you see?"

"Perfectly," she nodded, though she didn't in the least.

"Well, this is my idea, if you will help me. Promise me your allegiance, and, above all, secrecy." And they talked for some time.

"That's perfect," cried Mrs. Reese. "What a schemer you are! I'll call the first thing in the morning, and if she accepts I'll send you a line. Oh, of course, I shall carelessly mention Mr. Archer's name, with two or three others."

"And I shall take care," said McLaren, "that John knows nothing till just as he's coming."

"Don't come too awfully early, for she should be here first."

"And of course," put in Mac, "there will have to be an introduction, which you will make."

"Oh, trust me," answered Mrs. Reese; "I'm interested in the continuation of the romance."

II.

WE are glad at times to be free from our dearest friend, however strong the bond between us. There is a wish to escape from another self, a fellow-creature too closely identified with our own personality.

Archer felt this as he mechanically walked on in the same direction. When he reached the guard-gate, which in former times had meant to him, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther," he turned, as in his cadet days, so strong is the force of habit, and wandered back towards the plain.

Archer had had sweethearts many in his Southern home during his early days of boyish romance. But this was different. His love for Margaret Lawrence had come with his manhood and grown into it. Time had dulled the keen edge of his pain and made it bearable, but the wound had been deep, and it still quivered when touched. "It belongs to by-gone days," he thought, resolutely pulling himself together, "and there it shall rest." But to-night it would not rest; the familiar moonlighted scene appealed too strongly to his sentiment and imagination, and soon he was drifting back upon the tide of memory. He had nearly reached the corner where stood the brown, square pile of the old "Academic." The work of tearing down had begun, for government had generously recognized the long-felt need of its great school, and from the ruins of the old building, which had served its time like a faithful soldier, was to rise a new Academic.

If there be a place in the world where all things are done with system and order, it is at West Point; but

that day, whether by accident or design is not known, a ladder had been left standing at the side right against the iron balustrade. A fancy seized Archer, a desire to stand once again within these walls, and in another moment he had lightly climbed the ladder and stood on the stone balcony. The doors were closed, but not locked. He pushed one open and walked into the hall, letting in streams of moonlight that threw into deeper shadow the corridor beyond. His footfalls sounded strangely loud to him in the utter stillness of the place; a sudden feeling of intense loneliness came over him; he had never before been alone in this building. He went back and leaned against one of the granite pillars, resting his guitar against the railing. To the right he could see the river, gleaming like a broad band of silver at the foot of the encircling hills. Two or three sailboats were slipping lazily along, like great white birds wing-weary. To the left was camp, its rows of tents showing snowily through the foliage. All was still; the music had stopped; now and again the measured tread of the sentinel down the road could be faintly heard; then soon came three slow beats of the drum, "taps," in camp.

"All this hath been before," thought Archer, some favorite lines recurring to him, and his desolate feeling left him. Either this hour was the realization of a dream or the reflex action of moments lived before; but it was strangely natural, and he waited in a state of passivity for an indefinite, shadowy something.

The time, whether long or short, had been as nothing, when he became conscious of a regular, rhythmic vibration growing each moment till it strengthened into

sound. Nearer it came and louder, till there was no mistaking the tramp of many feet steadily coming up the stone steps. A moment after several cadets crossed the end of the balcony, and, at the clear, ringing command of the leader, marched by twos through the doorway into the hall. Irresistibly impelled, Archer, too, obeyed the order, hastening after the gray-coated figures, with all the alertness of a cadet fearing a "late."

"Sir, all are present or accounted for," and the section, ten in number, took their seats, Archer finding himself at the end of a long bench. As the instructor called different cadets to the black-board, Archer discovered that he was not among classmates or friends; they were strangers. Yet, as he now earnestly scanned each face, he thought he had seen some of them before, but as he pursued the idea it vanished even as he touched it. Then he saw on the board, designating each one's work, names glorious in their country's history. As he gazed spell-bound, the writing on the board grew fainter till it faded utterly, and the figures where they stood and sat became indistinct and then dissolved like a mist.

The room changed, a screen stood before the open door, and all around were cadet-caps, white gloves, and narrow strips of starched linen cadets called collars. Out in the corridor was the sound of many people walking, talking, and laughing, and from beyond came strains of lively dance-music mingling with the gay voices of cadets and merry girls. Archer walked down the long corridor to the dancing-room known as number one. Making his way through the row of cadets that were two or three deep about the door, he, too, stood and looked on at the bright scene. The string-band was playing a

delicious waltz of Waldteufel; and all were dancing as people dance nowhere but at West Point, with an ease and enjoyment delightful to see. There was Smith, J. T., fairly skimming over the polished floor, and Williams over there looking the embodiment of happiness, with that pretty Miss Miles. Brooks, too, has at last got the step, thanks to little Miss Harper, who has labored long and patiently with him. It's a large, fully-attended hop; the "Supe" is here an imposing figure in the group of smiling chaperons. But look! who is this? And Archer bent eagerly forward to watch a couple who at that moment stopped dancing and were lost in the crowd pushing out into the hall. Quickly he brushed past, reaching the space near the balcony before any one, and waited. Breathlessly he watched, feeling he knew not what. His eyes were riveted on a tall, fair cadet on whose arm leaned a young, lovely girl. They went out on the balcony where many other couples had strayed, and Archer followed closely after them. Soon they were the only ones left, and their voices, though low, were distinct in the stillness of the place. The girl was a little above medium height, slender, and gracefully moulded. She was perhaps not beautiful, but her face had a delicate, flower-like loveliness. She was in white, her brown waving hair was coiled low, and just now, with her head slightly bent and a tender, rapt expression on her sweet face, she looked in the silvery moonlight like a picture of St. Cecilia, only here there was no sorrow. The cadet at her side was evidently her lover, and Archer, with a strange feeling, knew that he was looking upon himself and Margaret Lawrence. He stretched out his arms and tried to speak, but could not;

"Margaret" only came in a whisper, but the forms had vanished and he was alone. A great desolation came over him; he felt weary and ill, and grasped the iron railing to keep himself from sinking.

Suddenly a faint but exquisitely sweet sound of music seemed to float about him. The air was filled with it; it was everywhere, but so vague; it was more like a succession of æolian wails than any distinct melody. The young man's music-loving soul was spell-bound, for the eerie music came to him like a message of comfort breathing promise and hope. Then the sound increased, gathering new voices each moment, till it swelled into a great chorus, now mournful like the sad strains of an elegy, now rising grand and majestic, like the battle-hymn of heroes. There were no words, but it seemed to say, "All must change and pass away,—our spirits can linger here no longer, but we go to our rest."

Then all sank into silence, but Archer still stood motionless. At length a sharp, ringing sound, succeeded by a peculiar resonance different from anything that had gone before, roused him into action. His guitar had fallen. He sprang to pick it up, held it with loving care, and then, quickly as he had come, left the balcony.

III.

McLaren had been right; the girl in white was Margaret Lawrence. On leaving the piazza she went to her room, but had no time to muse, for she was immediately followed by a bright pretty girl, who came in with a little breezy air.

"Such a delicious time! It was lovely in camp; you ought to have gone, Margaret. But I believe you rather

turn up your nose at cadets; perhaps you'll fancy the officers. Oh, that reminds me Mrs. Reese told me there's a most fascinating man visiting Lieutenant McLaren. Have I told you about him? McLaren, I mean. Well, my dear, this new officer,—what did she call him,—Parker?—Larcher?—Archer,—that's it, Archer. He must be a perfect bewitcher and a music fiend besides; sings like an angel. That would please you. And Mrs. Reese says—— What's the matter, dear? you look so—so—I don't know what, exactly. You're not going to be ill, are you?"

"I've no idea of anything so wild," said Margaret, smiling. "My dear Kitty, West Point has made you sensational."

"Well, I have a good time, and that's all I want. Why haven't you told me more about it, Margaret, and your cadet flirtations! I'm sure you had a lot of them. I firmly expect you'll have the fever over again and cut me out."

And so the gay girl ran on, not pausing for replies or noticing her cousin's abstracted manner. "*Liebchen, ade, scheiden thut weh*" still rang in Margaret's ears. Soon Kitty's chatter ceased, for her pretty head had scarcely pressed the pillow when she was asleep.

Margaret loosened her hair to rest her throbbing head, put out the light, and, pushing the blinds wide open, sat down by the window; she was not ready for sleep. The thoughts rushed to her mind, crowding upon each other, and through them always the refrain to the German lied. "He looks just the same," she thought, "only more manly. I wasn't wrong; I couldn't mistake his voice and that song." She softly sang,

"Liebchen, ade, scheiden thut weh;" but it ended in a sob. She dashed away the tears angrily. "Why should I care? he's forgotten me long ago, and has sung those same words to a dozen other girls. How strange that we should both be here together. We must meet, and it will be awkward, too. But he's nothing to me now, so why should I care?" But she did care, and she knew she did, hard as she might struggle against it. She had raised the barrier between them herself, but she too had suffered, for the blow had rebounded upon her own heart. To-night the charm of his voice had awakened the stifled love; every moment gave it new life; her whole being seemed overwhelmed by it. "I sent away a good and true man," she thought, "and with him my happiness."

She dropped her arms on the window-ledge, her head sank down between them, and her slight frame shook with sobs as the bitter tears fell now uncontrolled. She was very wretched. The moonlight streamed in upon her, but its calm silver beams brought no ray of hope to her heart; the soft night-breeze stirring her shimmering hair whispered no word of peace or comfort. Her grief had its way, and, exhausted by it, she still lay motionless, except for the quick-drawn breath that succeeds violent sobbing. Then these ceased, and one would have fancied the white, still figure sleeping, only her eyes were open and gazing out into the night. A look of calm and peace came to her face, and once a radiant smile lighted it as she quietly laid her hand on her wrist with a caressing touch. Suddenly she raised her head and stretched out her arms. She was listening with a look of intense eagerness. It was only a mo-

ment, then her arms fell and she rose to her feet. "I heard it," she said, softly, "and it was his voice."

The early summer dawn was glimmering as Margaret threw herself down to rest.

IV.

It was still early next morning when a card was brought to Margaret. "Are you sure it's for me?" she asked, as a faint flush rose to her face. The card was McLaren's.

"Quite sure, miss. Miss Margaret Lawrence?" he asked.

She went down and found McLaren in the deserted parlor; he came quickly forward to meet her, in his easy, bright fashion.

"You've not forgotten me, Miss Lawrence?" he asked.

"No, indeed! 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot?'" she answered, brightly, as she gave him her hand.

"Ah! that's friendly and does me good. I felt half afraid to venture, for fear that even my name might have dropped from your memory."

"My memory is not so treacherous, you see. I didn't know you were stationed here?"

"Oh, you know the army is a nomadic tribe and hard to keep track of unless one has ties there."

He meant nothing by this speech, but she colored.

"Sha'n't we go on the piazza?" she said; "it's much pleasanter."

McLaren saw the quick flush, and, as he followed her, decided upon a bold step.

"If she still loves him, she'll forgive the liberty," he thought, "and if not, why, I can't help it."

"I suppose Kitty told you I was coming?" asked Margaret, unconsciously paving the way.

"No; I saw you last night on the piazza," he said, watching her closely.

"Like me, you were enjoying the moonlight, I suppose?" she said, carelessly, but raising her fan to her face as a shield from the sun.

"Certainly; and like me, you, I suppose, were also enjoying the music?"

She made no reply.

"Do you know," he ruthlessly continued, "there is no music that appeals so to one as that of the human voice? I would rather hear that man sing than any one I've ever heard."

He paused a moment; she looked very pale, but he had no mercy.

"The simplest song gathers new meaning when he sings it," McLaren went on. "German songs seem to be his favorites, and how charmingly he sings them! You must have known them all, Miss Margaret; you are a musician? One in particular——"

"I had heard some of them before," she answered, low; her voice was unsteady, and she looked straight ahead of her.

"I noticed you left very suddenly." He stopped; he was going too far; her lip quivered and she was very white.

They were both silent for a few moments; then Margaret turned, her eyes flashing, though her voice was steady now. "Mr. McLaren, I'm glad to meet you as an old friend, but you have no right——"

She stopped, disarmed by his expression of frank friendliness.

"You were going to say I have no right to presume upon that title," he said, quickly. "Forgive me, Miss Margaret, your woman's pride is hurt, but your heart feels differently. For my old friend's sake—for John Archer—I can't be silent. I'm no messenger," he went on, as the color rushed to her face, "for he doesn't know you are here."

"He doesn't know," she faltered; "then——"

"At least he did not, but he soon must," said McLaren, rising; "and then——"

He looked rather than asked the question. Margaret stood speechless, motionless, her eyes downcast, her cheeks like the heart of a rose. The young man thought her very lovely. At last she looked up, a new light in her eyes and a smile on the slightly quivering lips.

"Then," she said, "then he must come and know for himself."

"Jack, dear old man, I wish I stood half your chance," muttered the young officer, as he moved away.

The girl stood where McLaren left her, looking out beyond the sun-lighted water and hills.

"He doesn't know I'm here, and yet he called me," she thought.

"Do you believe in mental magnetism, thought-transfer, or anything of the sort, Mac?"

"As I've never had any experience in that line, I can't say," was the answer. "Do I look like a fit subject for psychical research? I say, Jack, are you going to dip into occultism?"

"Don't be alarmed," said Archer, with a laugh; "but, all joking aside," he went on, seriously, "there was some-

thing strange last night. You would call it a dream, perhaps. It was no dream; but I tell you, Mac, I saw her—Margaret—as plainly as I see you now."

"Where?"

The two friends were just rounding the corner by the Academic building.

"Up there," said Archer, pointing.

"On the balcony? Impossible!" cried McLaren; "you were dreaming fast enough, my boy."

"I can't help it," persisted Archer. "I saw her, and so vividly that all day I've had a strange sense of her nearness to me."

"Jack," said McLaren, putting his hand on Archer's shoulder, "this is coming out all right, take my word for it. Who knows what the next few hours may bring?"

"What do you mean?" said Archer.

"Just what I said. And here we are."

They had reached one of a set of quarters known as the south quarters, a rather small and unpretending cottage, but with a generous piazza front framed in by vines. The hammock, chairs, and steps were all occupied; the Reese's was a popular place. Archer was known to all but the hostess, to whom he was immediately presented, and with his usual grace of manner he first in order devoted himself to her.

"Well, this is a gathering of the clans," said McLaren, as he sat down near the hammock, in which a dark, pretty girl sat lazily swinging. She turned a laughing face. "Is this what you call a clan?"

"That's Mac's way," said Captain Anderson, "of saying something nice, for he means that we are all very much at home and having a good time."

"I agree to that," said Norton, casting an adoring glance at Kitty Lawrence, who, leaning her pretty head against the vine-wreathed pillar, looked like a white blossom in the moonlight.

"And all that's needed to complete the charm is some music, such as we had last night," said Captain Anderson, glancing at Archer.

As if in answer to this wish, the piano was at that moment heard from the room opening on the piazza, a soft preluding of successive harmonious modulations. The true musician was recognized in the firm, ringing touch and rich harmonies. McLaren ceased his chatter and glanced at Mrs. Reese, who answered with a ready smile, and, turning to Archer, said,—

"You love music; so listen: I'll not say a word to you."

And John Archer did listen. The improvising had ceased and familiar sounds now succeeded; but few there had ever heard such rendering of the master's work. It was the Moonlight Sonata. A dream of music, Archer thought, as he listened to the soft, impressive notes, rising and falling like a pleading voice, then hushed into calm sweetness, and ending in rest and peace.

Then the Allegro, with its flitting lights and shadows in elfish pursuit, and then the grand close, with its rushing waves of sound and bursts of harmony. One by one had stopped talking till there was perfect silence, all feeling the power of the music. But to Archer it spoke as to no other; the ears of his understanding were open and thirstily drank in the sounds.

The music stopped, the chatter went on, but Archer

sat as if under a spell, his face in shadow. McLaren watched him. "Why don't the fellow take his chance? I believe he knows that's she."

The piano was heard again. Archer started. It was only a simple, soft little melody few would notice after the grand sonata, and only two besides Archer did do so.

These were Captain Anderson and McLaren, who had heard Archer sing it the evening before. But as the plaintive little refrain, "Liebchen, ade, scheiden thut weh," ended, there was a quick modulation to a higher, brighter key, and a Scotch air was heard tripping lightly alone, "Oh, hey for somebody, oh, hon for somebody."

Archer started up and went towards the low open window.

"My Scotch blood can't resist that," said McLaren. "Oh, hey for somebody," he sang; "Oh, hon for somebody," joined in Captain Anderson, and in a moment there was a chorus, and nobody noticed that the piano had stopped.

"Let's have another," said Mac, swinging into the "Bonnets o' Bonny Dundee." And so the good fellow kept it up till all declared their throats were hoarse.

"What has become of Margaret?" cried Kitty Lawrence, suddenly.

"And where's Mr. Archer?" said another voice.

"Miss Lawrence and Mr. Archer are old friends," explained Mrs. Reese.

"Oh," said Kitty; "and she never told me, and let me go on a whole string about him. What I'd heard, I mean."

"So that's it!" said Captain Anderson. "I see."

At that moment two figures came through the window,

and all eyes were mercilessly turned on them and there was a sudden hush. "Any one could have seen at a glance," Kitty Lawrence said afterwards, "and it must have been rather awkward for them, but then it was lots of fun!"

It was very shabby, but no one spoke.

"What a perfect evening!" said Margaret, rapturously. At which original remark every one chimed in, "perfect," "glorious," "delightful," and "we've enjoyed your music so much, Miss Lawrence," said Mrs. Reese.

McLaren was holding Archer's hand in a tight grip. "All right, Jack,—and say, old man, I'm going to announce it now," and he raised his voice.

"Friends and classmen," he began. All listened; something interesting was coming. "This isn't at all *en regle*," went on Mac; "for which breach of conventionalities may I be forgiven. I beg leave to announce, and take heart-felt pleasure in doing so, the engagement of Miss Margaret Lawrence to my dear old friend, John Archer. Let's give him a cheer, boys." And so they did, and a ringing one. Then Margaret, her lovely face all aglow in the white moonlight, and Archer, looking as if he could never know anything but happiness, had to run the gauntlet.

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